

T R A V E L S
T H R O U G H
G E R M A N Y,
I N A

S E R I E S O F L E T T E R S ;

W R I T T E N I N G E R M A N

B Y T H E B A R O N *R I E S B E C K*,

A N D T R A N S L A T E D B Y

T H E R E V . M R . M A T Y,

L A T E S E C R E T A R Y T O T H E R O Y A L S O C I E T Y , A N D U N D E R
L I B R A R I A N T O T H E B R I T I S H M U S E U M .

V O L . I I .

L O N D O N :

P R I N T E D F O R T . C A D E L L , I N T H E S T R A N D :

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T R A V E L S

THROUGH

G E R M A N Y.

L E T T E R XXVIII.

Vienna.

THE present court possesses several valuable collections, all of which are as much as possible open to the public. The imperial cabinet of medals hath scarce its equal in the world; there are twenty-two thousand ancient coins; the modern coins are extremely valuable; likewise a very valuable, and to those who wish to study the history of the middle ages, a very precious part of this collection, is, that which

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consists

consists of all the coins and medals from Charle-
 maine to this time. The thought was Charles
 the VIth's, but the collection owes its existence
 to the emperor Francis, who laid out great sums
 upon it. I say nothing to you of the several
 other rich collections of natural history, mathe-
 matical instruments, &c. &c. but, that like
 every thing the court possesses, they are open
 to every body, without the least trouble. But
 the library is one of the most precious in the
 world. It consists of more than three hundred
 thousand volumes, twelve thousand of which are
 valuable manuscripts. The building in which
 they are preserved is one of the handsomest in
 the town. It is open every morning till twelve
 o'clock, for all persons who choose to come.
 They are furnished with tables, chairs, pen, ink,
 and paper; a secretary looks in the catalogue
 for the books wanted, which are immediately
 taken down from the shelves by some livery
 servants belonging to the court. There are
 fires in the room all the winter. None of the
 servants are allowed to take any thing. When
 once you are acquainted with the librarians,
 one of whom is always in a room adjoining, it
 is not so difficult to obtain prohibited books as
 has been pretended. Mr. Pilati, indeed, in his
 travels, says, that you cannot have a good book
 without

without the archbishop's permission; but I myself read the History of the Council of Trent, and all Machiavel's works through, without any leave.

Exclusive of the court library, there are several other public places where people may read. The bookseller Trattner once took it into his head to have a learned coffee-house in his great palace.* He promised to provide the subscribers with all the newspapers, periodical publications, and pamphlets, in all the living languages. If this project had been properly followed, it might have proved the foundation of an academy, or learned society; but the subscribers soon saw that Trattner had no view but what regarded his own pocket. This Mr. Trattner compels the professors to sell him their manuscripts, and pays them not a farthing for them. He conceives himself to have this privilege as bookseller to the court, and exercises an intolerable tyranny over all the booksellers and *litterati* of the place. Notwithstanding the high tone he affects, he does not scruple to descend to the lowest meannesses. He prints over again, with the imperial privilege, works which have been already printed with this privilege in the other parts of Germany. They say he has persuaded the Empress,

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that

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that let a book be ever so successful, the book-feller gets nothing by it, if he pays the expence of printing; so that beside giving him the copy, she often pays the whole expence of printing the books she takes an interest in; but though Trattner flatters her foibles in many respects, there is not a person in Vienna who disobeys her orders more strenuously. If you will pay him enough for them, he will procure you all prohibited books, even the most scandalous; and these are the only books which the generality care for; for it is not as with us, where you meet with *Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws*, *Voltaire's Universal History*, and *Rousseau's Social Contract*, in the hands of people who make no pretences to literature. Here are many literati who know nothing of these, and the like books, which they leave entirely to the higher nobility, and some of the officers. What succeeds most here is buffoonery, and even the bettermost part of the reading public, is satisfied with plays, romances, and fairy-tales. I know a dozen young men of letters, as these creatures here call themselves, who have read nothing since they came from school, but German and French poets. I was once tempted to go round the table of the public library to see what the readers were employed in; two or three out of about

four and twenty were reading ancient writers, one was reading Sully's Memoirs, and all the rest had either romances, or were looking over such books as the *Museum Florentinum*, and the descriptions of the *Antiquities at Herculaneum*, for the sake of the prints. I must, however, make one observation in honour of the Hungarians; these generally call for the several historians of their own country, and they appeared to me to read them with an animation that bespoke the freedom of their government. May it not be owing to this difference of government, that the Hungarians, as I have generally observed, have more patriotism, and consequently care more for the history of their native country than the Austrians do? I have not found one of all the latter who had a taste for any such thing.

After what I have been saying, it is not extraordinary that the societies of this country should be as dead as they are. The subject of the theatre is soon exhausted, after which there is nothing left but the news of the day, and trifling observations. It is only the women who keep up the conversation at all; these have infinitely more wit, vivacity, and knowledge of all kinds of things, than the men. In several houses I was in, the men had nothing to say after the first quarter of an hour, but their wives

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and

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and daughters kept up the conversation with great chearfulness. It is very true, that their fund consists only of the news of the day, but the news gives rise to remarks, and remarks give rise to observations and debates that often prove very interesting; with the men there is not even this resource, for they are too stupid even for this.

The women of this place are handsome and well made, but they have no colour, and their faces are not interesting. They are easy and lively in their motions, their gait, and their speech. They are more composed, more determined, and more manly than the French women, but not so heroic as the English. I cannot give you a better idea of them, than by telling you they are between French and English. There are no great beauties here, nor any very ugly women. They have not yet imitated our country women in their winter-dress, which continues to be of Polanaifes, trimmed with very expensive furs, which reach down to the feet. As these dresses have no high pockets, are open at the breast, and fall easily about the lower part of the body, they are favourable to the shape, and remind us of the Greek simplicity. A tinge of superstition, peculiar to the women of this place, is united to great sensibility of heart, and rather

ther tends to increase, than to repress love, friendship, and benevolence. Moore has made some good observations upon this subject, but nothing gives a better idea of the thing, than seeing a lady bespeak masses in a convent, and give alms, with a wish that God may recover her sick *Cicisbeo*.

The *Cicisbeat* is upon the same footing here as in Italy; it subsists amongst the great as a mode that has been once established; the poor take it up as a matter of trade; and it is only amongst the merchants and manufacturers that you meet with any instances of jealousy. I cannot forbear giving you a droll instance of the effects of this, which took place some years ago. A man of fashion having been rather too frequent in his visits to a rich tradesman's wife; the husband, who was displeased with the intercourse, took the following method of putting a stop to it: one morning, when he knew the lovers were together, he ordered all his servants to be in waiting with flambeaux on the stairs; he then stepped into the room, and told his excellency, that his servants were come to light him home; the other was exceedingly surpris'd, but affected not to understand him; upon which the merchant immediately took him by the arm, and led him very ceremoniously down stairs; here

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the servants, armed with their flambeaux, surrounded him on all sides, and led him into the middle of the street in broad day light; the tradesman in the mean time standing upon the steps of his house making bow upon bow, and under the pretence of recommending himself to the nobleman's custom, shouting out his name as loud as he could.

You seldom hear of any extraordinary instances of impropriety and indecency in this place. Considering the state of the country, it is not extraordinary, that a taste for pleasure should be so prevalent as it is, it having certainly more food here than any where else. The number of poor is much smaller than at Paris, and, probably, than at London. Every thing, even the clothing of the lowest servant-maid, bespeaks a great degree of affluence. The prodigality of the higher nobility, the many, and great appointments paid by the court, and the extensive commerce of the middling classes, greatly assists the circulation of money. The constant circulation of the town is estimated at twelve million of imperial guilders, or 12,000l. sterling. The expence of living is likewise less than it is any where else, and Vienna is probably the only town, in which the price of the necessaries of life is not equal to the quantity of gold in circulation.

circulation. This arises from the great want of money in the neighbouring Hungary. You have good wine here for three kreutzers the bottle, and a very good dinner for twelve. I know a *traiteur*, who, for thirteen sols a head, furnishes a *table d'hôte*, consisting of vegetables, broiled meat, a pudding, or roasted calf's-liver, and beef; the bread and a gill of wine are included: in a word, the man with the *forty crowns* might live here very well, but if he has more, he will certainly be tempted to spend it. The more nature gives, the more necessities men make to themselves, and she is so profuse here, that they of course become so too. The infinite number of richly pensioned dependants of the court, the numerous nobility, and the many strangers who come here only for amusement, know no other pleasure, than to follow it wheresoever it leads. Riches, idleness, and the liberality of nature, must render a people dissipated, whose religion is the opposite to frugality, and whose governors cannot give their spirits any other occupation.

The commerce of this country is now extremely flourishing; but it was a long time before the Austrians knew how to enjoy the advantages which nature had provided them with. Notwithstanding they were masters of one of the largest rivers in the world, which carries ships upwards of seventy German miles before
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it comes to them, and afterwards opens them a way into the Levant and Black Sea ; there was no spirit of trade among them till the last Emperor's time. It is true, Charles the Sixth had done what he could to promote this spirit throughout the whole of his dominions, but though his attempts had been successful in other places, he met with a disappointment in the dutchy of Austria and the capital, for the nobility of these places still considered merchants as a kind of brute beasts ; and the jesuits kept the protestants, who, in the sequel, did most for industry, either entirely at a distance, or were sure to crush them, when they found means to creep in. The court, in short, contracted many debts, and its credit grew too weak, to afford any substantial support to those who needed its assistance. The Emperor Francis, having restored the finances, was himself a merchant, and by degrees the nobility began to look upon the industrious merchant with a somewhat less degree of contempt. Still, however, a great deal was reserved for the present Emperor, whose popularity, and aversion to old prejudices, are in no instance more conspicuous than in this. He introduces ingenious artists and merchants into the first societies. It is true, indeed, that those who think all merit consists in birth

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and external appearance, neglect nothing to make the plebeian feel he is out of his element ; but a word from the monarch sets all to rights, and the more the noblesse disturb themselves, the more Joseph is sure to take opportunities of humbling their pride. Some years ago, when he was at Prague, he came into a large company, leading a citizen's wife by the hand ; all the ladies immediately began to stare, but he took no farther notice of it, than by going down with her the only dance he danced.

After all, commerce would not be very flourishing, had not the clogs it was under, when the monarch's confessor was the director of all the departments in the state, been taken off, and were it not mostly in the hand of strangers.

The facility with which so many foreign families make large fortunes, is a public and striking instance of how much they surpass the natives in activity and understanding. The baron de *Fries*, the court banker, a *Mbulhaufe* by birth, who had no capital, has become, in an incredible short time, one of the first bankers in Europe. He is worth at least four millions of guilders. Most of the principal manufacturers and merchants come from Suabia, Franconia, Saxony, and other parts of Germany. The citizens of Nurenberg, Augsburg, Ulm, Lindaw,

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Lindaw, and other cities, met here with a refuge from the tyranny, which every day more and more obtains in their own countries. Most of them have made their fortunes by good sense, industry, and especially by that frugality which so essentially distinguishes them from the natives. There is no doubt, but that the strangers, and especially the protestants, will likewise make a flourishing place of Trieste.

With all this, however, trade is still far below what it might be; but it makes great strides every day. It is said, there are already above a hundred silk weavers looms in the place. There are also plush and cotton manufactures, and foreign trade is carried on with Austrian and Hungarian wines, Bohemian and Moravian linens (which go by Trieste into Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Turkey), wrought and unwrought iron, steel and copper, leather, china, and other articles; these produce several millions. All this the government protects so heartily, that it has always a fund ready for the encouragement of the enterprising and discrete projector. This fund it lends out without interest, for five, six, or even ten years, after which it receives interest gradually from one to two or three per cent.

From these beginnings great advantages are, no doubt, to be expected in the next generation,
when,

when, instead of being proud of their debts, the nobility shall deign to be in company with a rich trader, and, instead of reasoning on a bill of fare, will converse with him on the profits of the year; but education must first be thoroughly reformed, for whilst it is trusted to French abbés and chambermaids, all that is done for trade is but patch-work.

There is bad news about town; a few days ago the Empress returned indisposed from a country expedition, and this indisposition is now become a serious disorder. The physicians fear an inflammation in the lungs, which from the frequent changes of the weather, is the common illness of this place. I hope to begin my next letter in better spirits than I finish this. Fare thee well.

L E T T E R XXIX.

Vienna.

IT is past, and the great Theresa, who, with all her weakneses, was one of the greatest monarchs that ever sat on the throne, is no more. —I will say nothing to you of the grief of her subjects, nor of the pompousness of the funeral, nor of the mighty attendance that followed her to her grave; all these you will see in the public prints. It was well known that, either from the weakness natural to old people, or the apprehension that her successor might make innovations she disapproved, she had long looked upon death with some kind of fear and terror. This made her wish to avoid it, as it drew near; but when she found this impossible, religion shewed itself in its full lustre, and, though conquered, the Empress was still the heroine. She conversed for several hours together with her son, and employed her cares about her family. To the last instant she was the best of mothers. The successor, on his part, though at the time of life when all the passions are at the highest, and though he felt himself on the eve not only of possessing a large empire, but of being free from the controul he had hitherto met

met with in his most favourite projects, was in this moment only a son. He forgot every thing else, and could only weep for a mother, with the value of whose heart he was acquainted.

The family affection that obtains in the imperial house is very remarkable. I must lay before you some passages that set this amiable princess's character in a very strong point of view.—No stranger to the pleasures of virtuous love, she wished her children to enjoy them, but would have them enjoy them in the bounds imposed by virtue and religion. With these views she had given a free consent to her daughter's marriage with a portioned prince of the house of Saxony, though contrary to the Emperor's inclination, who was afraid of the imperial house being burthened with too many dependants. Upon the same principle, when her son Maximilian was made coadjutor of the Teutonic order, and in consequence obliged to take a vow of chastity, she obtained a dispensation for him from the pope, in case he should ever choose to leave the order and marry. Nor was it her fault that her other two daughters were not married, as nothing would have made her so happy as to see herself surrounded with a numerous train of grand-children. Another

trait

trait of the same kind was her retaining the truly maternal love of her children, however elevated or however distant they were from her. As a proof of this, she would frequently write both to the Queens of France and Naples, letters not only filled with the best of advice, but when there was occasion for them, with the tenderest motherly reproofs. She would often reprove the Emperor in company for trifles, after he had come to the imperial crown. This authority, however, which she preserved over all her children to the last instant of her life, was so tempered with true affection, that it displeased none of those over whom it was exercised. Her happiest hours used to be those in which she received letters from the courts of Versailles, Parma, Naples, and Milan. Then she would shut herself up in her closet, with her most intimate friends, and pour into their bosoms the pleasure of being the mother of so fine an offspring.

The archduke governor of Milan, and the duke of Saxe Teschen, whom the Emperor is wont to call his very *dear* relations, will feel her loss very severely, as they cannot but suffer from the œconomy which the Emperor is so rigid a master of even towards himself.

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Since the Empress's death is known, you may observe a wonderful change in the faces and actions of the priests and court attendants. The prelates, who a few days since rode over the bellies of the people in the streets, now sneak about chop-fallen, and the courtiers seem to be buried in thought how to pay their debts. But before I indulge myself in conjectures on what is to come, I will lay before you the present state of the country as the Empress left it.

The house of Hapsburg Loraine, now ranks as one of the greatest powers in Europe; the only rivals of its greatness are Russia, France, and Great Britain; but at the beginning of this century, and till the time it belonged to the late Empress, it was one of the middling powers of Europe, and it required all the strength of England, and all the money of Holland, to support it, whenever it attempted to take any great part in business. Even at the time when the sun did not set in its dominions, it was not as formidable as it is now: at length the loss of so many kingdoms and provinces taught it, that the strength of a state does not so much consist in the quantity of its internal power, as in the uses it is able to make of it. A great man, who served it at a time when it was still in possession of Alsatia, Naples, Sicily, and several

other countries, compared it to a pyramid, which stands upon its point, and totters by the weakness of its principal part. The pyramid is now something lighter, but it stands, as nature intended it should, on its own proper foundations, firm and unshaken.

If all the Austrian dominions lay together, they would contain a larger extent of country than France. Hungary, with Transylvania, Croatia, Slavonia, Temeswar, and part of Dalmatia, contains 4760 square miles; Bohemia 900, Moravia, with part of Silesia, 430; the circle of Austria, Styria, and the Dukedom, with Carinthia, the Ukraine, the country belonging to Austria in Suabia, the Earldom of Falkenstein, the newly acquired part of Bavaria, and part of Frioul, 2200; the Netherlands, 500; the possessions of Lombardy, 200; the kingdoms of Galicia and Lodomeria, together with Bukovina, which has been taken from the Turks, 1400; in all 10,360 square miles; whereas, France hardly contains 10,000. You will say, the difference is not very great—it is not; but when the expected junctions of Tuscany, and the Modenese are made, it will be worth attending to. As to natural blessings, they have been bestowed still more plentifully here than in France; for
there

there are no luxuries to be met with in the latter which some countries belonging to the Emperor do, or may not produce, wine, oil, and silk not excepted; and as to matters of prime necessity, such as corn and cattle, they would be able to furnish half France with them, after providing their own people. The several ores too, which are found in the hills round Hungary, in the Tyrol, Carinthia, Carniola, and Styria, are of as much profit to the country, as those of Portuguese and Spanish America to their possessors; so that if there was only such a sea coast as ours, and the country was improved to what it might be, no doubt it would be a fourth richer than France; but our fortunate situation, the waters we command on all sides, and the navigable rivers, which carry out our exports from the most remote parts of the country, give an advantage which is not to be disputed.

Hungary is, without doubt, the richest part of the Austrian dominions;—it not only possesses every thing that is produced in the other countries, but feeds them with its overflow, and excels them as much in the quality, as in the quantity of what it produces; but here we have great occasion to observe the truth of that axiom, that the more nature does for man, the

less he commonly does for himself. The inhabitant of the Swiss mountains extracts his sustenance from his nakedness, and has changed wildernesses into cultivated and inhabited lands; the Hollander has turned the muddy sands of the Rhine and Maese, what the sea is constantly disputing with him, into a garden, whilst the excellent grounds in Hungary still lie waste. I believe, that at Vienna, they think that the plenty Hungary is able to export, is owing to its own population; but it is not so; for were it three times as much peopled as it is, it would export in much greater plenty still, if the cultivation was what it is in the greatest part of Suabia. As things now are, not only a great part of this fruitful land is uncultivated, but even that which is cultivated is not turned to near the advantage it might. In this country they know nothing of artificial cultivation, such as dunging in a cheap way, the mixture of different earths, and the use of chalky clay to manure, though parts of the country produce this last commodity in great abundance. They suffer, at least more than half the ground there is need for, to lay fallow. Their common way of threshing, is by driving oxen over the corn, by which half of it is left for straw. When you are travelling
through

through this country, you think yourself going over a wild, though you are in fact upon a bottom, which with very little trouble would produce fifty, sixty, or even one hundred fold. The roads are of an immense breadth, and the fields adjoining them of so little value, that the postilions drive through them, without the least ceremony, whenever a little mud or rain in the highway reminds them of its being more convenient.

The inhabitants excuse their bad farming by the little value which grain bears, and say, that if their harvests were ten times greater, they should gain nothing by them. There may be some truth in this, but the fault is certainly owing originally to a bad government. The value of grain would undoubtedly increase, with an increased population, and if the farmer had sufficient encouragement, the land might be put to other uses, besides the growing of grain. They already grow a great deal of tobacco, saffron, and other valuable articles; but there are numberless others which might be produced, if, what you will scarce believe, government did not rather seek to discourage, than promote agriculture.

The exportation of the Hungarian wines, one of the richest products of the country, and
 which,

which, if it were free, would soon ruin the sale of the French wines in the North, is clogged with innumerable obstructions. These the legislature imposes under the idea, that if once they did not exist, the trade of the Austrian wines would be ruined. The discouragement in consequence has been carried to such a height, that not long since there existed a law, that no quantity of Hungarian wine should be exported without exporting so much Austrian wine with it. This, no doubt, suits the Austrian nobility who have estates with vines upon them; but it is feeding the little finger at the expence of the whole body; for, as none but those who can afford to pay exorbitantly for their drink will buy the Austrian wines, the consequence is, that, except a few of the rich nobility, France supplies all the North, which otherwise would take its wine from Hungary. Nor does the evil end here; the Hungarian peasant, who is oppressed by his lord, seeks to drown his sorrow in the cup, which he either makes himself, or can buy in most places for two, three, or four creutzer the bottle. The consequence of this is, that men who in their youth are plump, ruddy, and seemingly built for ever, grow pale, emaciated, and dwarfish, and begin to droop after thirty, so that
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the population is already much diminished, and would grow less and less, if it were not for the accession of foreigners. It is partly owing to this, and partly to the want of education, that many tracts of the country have the exact appearance of American lands, and, were it not that you see no scalps or enemies skulls to drink out of, you would often think yourself in company with so many Cherokees. The tax on Hungarian tobacco, when exported, is no less hurtful to the agriculture of this country. Certainly the farmers of this part of the revenue in the Austrian dominions ought to have it in command to import such a proportion of Hungarian tobacco, with all they import from other places.

There is no country in the world which has a greater variety of inhabitants than Hungary. The ancient possessors of the country were partly Tartars, and partly Sclavonians. Amongst the former we may reckon the Hungarians, now properly so called, the Cumanians, the Seclers and the Yatfigers. Their manners and appearance plainly shew that they are of kin to the Calmucks, and descendants of the old Scythians. Their deep eyes, angular cheek bones, and yellow skins, distinguish them from the Sclavonians, who besides are whiter,

more fleshy, and stouter built. There are several parts of the country in which both the races are continued pure and unmixed. The Slavonians consist of Croats, Bohemians (who originally are a branch of the Croats), Servians, Russians, and Wenden Polackers. There are besides German colonists, but if they choose to possess lands, they must buy their nobility for 2000 ducats, which make about 22000 livres. Besides all these, there are Walachians, Bulgarians, Turks, Greeks, Armenians, Jews, and Gypsies, which last are the richest of all these foreigners.

All these people, a few of the German colonists only, and the higher nobility, which is modelled after the fashion of the court of Vienna, excepted, are still in a barbarous state.

Indeed it must be owned that the court instead of succeeding in improving them, as it has done the rest of its subjects, has rather done them harm than good, by the attempts it has made for the purpose. Whilst they were left to themselves, they were warlike, and, like all the children of nature, whom a false policy has not spoiled, open-hearted, hospitable, frank, and steady to their promises. An old officer, who spent his youth among the Croats, has assured me, that they are not to be known since
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they have been disciplined ; for, instead of being a trusty, spirited, and generous soldiery, they are become a band of treacherous, tricking, cowardly robbers. ‘ I had much rather,’ said he, ‘ have had to do with them when they were entirely undisciplined, and under the influence only of their own laws and customs. It is true they plundered both friend and foe when we went into the field, and committed every kind of depredation in the towns where they were quartered ; but these were the workings of a strong sensual appetite, which did not prevent their being of the greatest service. They used to take the most dangerous out-posts, in the very teeth of the enemy—never deserted—would follow their officers with the utmost fidelity through any dangers—could fast many days without making any complaints, and provided you left them what they had stolen, which they did not affect to conceal, were indefatigable on a day of battle. The alteration which discipline has effected in them is, that they, indeed, steal no longer openly, but they steal secretly, and steal from each other whenever they can ; they have learned the methods of concealing their thefts, and are always making cabals against their officers ; and though

‘ become

' become too cowardly to desert when there
 ' is any danger attending desertion, they are
 ' sure to do it whenever they can with safety.
 ' They grumble whenever they are kept two
 ' days embodied in the field, and never put on
 ' their uniform without cursing it. They look
 ' upon their overseers as their enemies, and
 ' hate them. Formerly it was an unheard of
 ' thing, for a Croat to go over to the Turks,
 ' but now they join them to the number of
 ' 20 and 30, and plunder their native country.
 ' The same thing is true with regard to the
 ' Sclavonians; and even the rest have been
 ' rather hurt than bettered by regulations not
 ' adapted to their circumstances.'

What this gentleman said from experience
 is conformable to true philosophy; for it is
 only by religion that you can ever be success-
 ful in civilizing a barbarian. Any other at-
 tempt, any restriction which tends to cure
 him of his vices, without shewing him the ad-
 vantage of virtue to himself, only makes a
 motley composition of the faults of the two
 states.

L E T T E R XXX.

Vienna.

NO doubt but there is much illusion in Rousseau's idea of a social contract. Fate, which plays so many other games with us, throws us into some peculiar society, by which we are fettered before we have time to think of a contract. Accident, and iron hearted necessity, have been the true legislators, of all the monarchies, aristocracies, democracies, and their numerous subdivisions, that ever existed in the world. It is likewise certain, that upon the whole, we find ourselves better under the direction of capricious fortune, than if we had set down originally to bind and connect each other in eternal chains. The will of the strongest still remains the ultimate decider of all difficulties, and whatever covenants there might have been, it must have been so, as often as the strongest should have felt his weight, or his interest should have come in competition with that of others.

It is nevertheless true, that in these various ~~gallies~~ to which we are chained, the good of the whole cannot be better promoted, than when the will of the whole, or at least of the majority,

majority, are directed according to the plumb-line of legislation, and of social contract. No Sultan has any thing to fear from this participation of his power, though he should divide it with all his subjects, from his Grand Vizier, to the lowest slave under him. The sovereign, whether he has one head, or a hundred, cannot promote his own interest more effectually, than by considering his supreme will as the result of the enlightened wills of all, or the greater part of his subjects. A real opposition between the interests of the governor and his subjects never exists, when it seems to do so, it is only the cozenage of accident. All history is full of this truth, the attention to which, will effectually secure the people from tyranny, even when the private character of the sovereign is a cruel one. The prince can never be more secure from murder, treachery, and rebellion, than when he has convinced his subjects that their interests is the rule of his legislation, and it must be so, if he will not hurt himself. Interest is the most sacred band among men, and their happiness depends upon knowing what it truly is. The misfortunes of men, have been always more owing ~~to~~ their governors not knowing in what their true interests

rests consisted, than to their wickedness, or depravity.

Superstition, and the dissipation of princes together, first invented that species of politics, the principles of which Machiavel first collected, but did not invent. Nero and Augustus had already used it, but it was only in modern Italy that it was considered as a true art of government. From thence, with other arts and sciences, did this hostile art to human nature spread itself over the rest of Europe. The ministers of several European courts, which had formed themselves after the Italian models, imagined they would govern the better, the finer and more subtle policy they adopted. Lewis XI. Richelieu, and Mazarin, were the great masters of this art, and from that time to this, the happy times of Henry IV. alone excepted, it would have been looked upon as folly in France, to have aimed at governing the people, by love, generosity, and information with regard to their true interests.

The priests, particularly the jesuits, whose government of their own society is established upon principles of the same kind, contributed much to give them currency in courts. There they were treated as holy mysteries, which, like the philosopher's stone, could make demigods of the possessor.

Blinded

Blinded by this political art of gold making, princes dared to deviate from the plain and strait line of nature, that line which always conducts to happiness, which is the same in a state as in a private family, according to which every governor must consider himself as the master of a private family, who has no other view than to promote the happiness of his children, and his servants.

The Jesuits, and some Italian *parvenus*, introduced the spirit of Machiavelism into this country. I do not know whether it is to be attributed to the humour of the nation, or any other cause, that it was not attended with the same bad consequences here, as in Italy, France, Spain, and even England, where the grossest abuses of religion, friendship, and love, were sanctified under the name of state necessity; and treachery towards friends, with the murder of fathers and brothers, were only considered as political *jeu d'esprits*. Although this court has not stained itself so deeply with royal blood, or even with that of dangerous subjects, as those above mentioned, it must be confessed that its administration, particularly what relates to Hungary, has had some little appearance of cunning and oppression about it. No doubt but that religious prejudices, from

which the Empress, amiable as she was, was not quite free, have contributed in great measure to this.

On the very aspect of things, one sees that the government of this country is insidious. The interests of the higher nobility are different from those of the rest of the country; their under tenants, which make the greatest part of the people, are not feudal subjects, neither have they any real property; they are farmers who may be turned out of their farms upon the least dissatisfaction. The nobility contributes nothing but free gifts to the necessities of the state, though it is in possession of half the produce of the country. It is almost the only order in the state, for the higher orders of the priesthood are chosen from the nobility, so that the interests of the two orders is in fact one. The cities are too small in number, and too insignificant in themselves, to form any corps capable of making head against the other two. In short, the boasted freedom of Hungary is only a privilege of the nobility and clergy, to live at the expence of the whole country.

Hitherto, the court have tried every artifice to deprive the nobility of this pernicious preponderance. The contest between the sovereign
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and the nobles soon broke out into several rebellions, the most famous of which were those of Tekely and Ragotzki. The execution of Counts Serini, Nadaſti, Frangipani, and Settenback, which followed close, have been quoted by some, to shew, that the court of Vienna, though generally unwilling to recur to them, is not incapable of using Turkish measures to free itself of troublesome and dangerous dependants. I own I think that its conduct on other occasions sufficiently justifies it from these reproaches; and, indeed, if the testimony of history is to be believed, it appears that these nobles were traitors. The plan which the court has followed for a long time, to reduce this overgrown nobility, promises much more success than any extraordinary acts of severity, which only serve to irritate the minds of men, and set them more upon their guard. The court of Vienna, conscious of the influence, luxury and pleasure have over the minds of men, allured the proud Hungarians from their freeholds to the court, or to the city. By distinguished places, titles, and marriages, they gave them opportunities to spend their money in a brilliant way, to contract debts, and finally, by the seizure of their lands for the payment, to surrender at discretion. The deceived Hun-

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garian

garian looked upon it as an honour, to connect himself with the Austrian, who made a greater figure than himself at court, and took a greater share in the government of the country. For this purpose he chose his wife at Vienna, and fettered himself by this means. The lady too, by introducing the court manners into his house, finished corrupting him, and made him entirely dependant. There is hardly an Hungarian noble, at this time of day, that is either free from debt, or that does not, like the Austrian one, look upon his debts as an honour. The court has consequently no further commotions to fear in this country, as the discontented people will not easily find a leader with power and consequence enough to make their risings dangerous.—The dissipation of the Hungarians has also bound them to the court by another tie, as their necessities no longer allow them to serve for nothing, but make the pay of the court an object to them.—Another way that has been taken, has been that, of allowing the Austrian nobility to purchase Hungarian estates, in proportion as the owners were obliged to sell them, or, as they fell into the crown by forfeitures, &c. At this time of day, several among the first Hungarian nobility are Germans, who strengthen the influence of the

court. The two nations are mixed, their manners are nearly the same. The more persons partake of it, the more indifferent the Hungarian is to its liberty, and the less estate he possesses, the less he cares for his country. The promotion of the higher ecclesiastics to great preferments, is another mode of binding the nobility, which the court has practised with success.

Besides what has been already stated, the court uses several other means, that depend upon time and circumstances. One of the most efficacious is, the loading the produce of Hungary with very heavy taxes. These oppressions indeed, immediately affect the nobility only, to whom the exports properly belong, as the people have no property; but, indirectly, they hurt the whole country, and particularly the manufacturer, and merchants in great towns, by the diminution of the coin in circulation. The duties on the exports of Hungarian wines, are so considerable, that the Croats who inhabit the mountains, are obliged to buy the wine, which, but for these duties, they might have as cheap from their fellow subjects, in Venetian Dalmatia. The fact is, the court had rather let the country lose money than suffer Hungary to be rich.

Almost

Almost all the employments of the country, which the constitution does not require to be given to natives, are possessed by Germans, who often prove the most terrible despots. Thus, in the cities of Illyria, which depend entirely on the council of war, and are entirely under military government, almost all the employments are held by foreigners. The Germans have made themselves so odious here by their tyranny, that the Croat knows no more odious name, than to give a man that of a Suabian. ‘He is a Suabian,’ means with them every thing that is detestable and contemptible. Under the name of Suabian, the Croat, as well as the inhabitants of Vienna, includes every German, who is not an Austrian. The natives of Austria, who are sent into Hungary, behave there like Turkish Pachás, or Nabobs: their pride leads them to make the Hungarians feel, that they are the ruling nation; their dissipation compels them to use every extortion, to procure money; and they are made still worse than they otherwise would be, by the difference of their manners, and religion. It is from the oppression of foreigners, that the native Illyrian has taken the dishonest and stubborn part of his character, which is so unnatural to him.

Notwithstanding that the principal places are occupied by great men, it is impossible to be more worthless than the greater number of the public servants are. Generally speaking, there is not a grain of patriotism, a grain of knowledge, a grain of good will, or a grain of activity, amongst them. Pride, vanity, self interest, and, hard-heartedness, distinguish them all. The only things they look up to, are the pays, and the titles, and they treat business as a matter of indifference. Do not imagine that I exaggerate, for I assure you that what I say is, with very few exceptions, literally true. The native Hungarians, who have a share in the government of their own country, have infinitely better understanding of the duties of their places, and more delight in discharging them, than the Austrians; and yet these possess almost all the places, and the others are exposed to their tyranny!

Our great Henry used to say, ‘happy is the gentleman who has his 5000 a year, and does not know me.’ If the Imperial court is desirous that the Hungarian should enjoy any kind of happiness, it is certainly not that recommended by the great Henry. They look upon it as indispensibly necessary to bind them in court chains, and take away every feeling of liberty

liberty and true honour from them. They do all they can to stifle their national spirit; they have no idea of the honour of ruling over a free and sentimental people, but conceive they must make slaves of the whole nation, in order to govern it.

The most cruel violations of the national contract, and the liberty of mankind, have been those which have arisen on a religious account. I can safely affirm, that it would take two hundred years more to undo the mischief which this court has done itself, during the two last hundred years, by the religious persecutions in Hungary. It is, indeed, one of those contradictions which most feelingly bespeaks the debility of the human mind, that whilst the present administration, on the one hand, does all it can to promote population and industry in Hungary; on the other, it persecutes in every way possible, the most industrious part of its subjects, and that part whose religious opinions, are the most favourable to population.

One fourth of the inhabitants of the Hungarian dominions, in which I include Transylvania and Illyria, are Catholics; one fourth are Greeks, Jews, and Anabaptists; the other half are Lutherans, or reformed. From the circumstance of the religion of the country being

Catholic, it was natural to expect that the Roman Catholic religion would be the established one of the state. With this no sensible man would have been offended ;—but to take away three hundred churches from the Protestants, while the Jews had the power of building as many synagogues as they pleased ;—to force Protestants to go twelve miles to church, whilst many Catholic churches were tenanted by rats and mice only ;—to take away the Protestant schools, and yet to allow the parents to send their children abroad for education ;—to be eager after improvement in agriculture and industry, and yet rather see the land inhabited by Calmucks and Gypsies, than by laborious and moral Protestants ;—to treat these worse, in short, in every respect than the Turks or Jews, this certainly was pulling down with one hand, what the court was endeavouring to rear with another ; it was destroying the national character, without improving the external circumstances of the people. It is now well known, and the example of the English fully proves it, that the only way out of barbarism, is through real religion. Judge then what it must be to tread this road backwards, and to substitute the superstitious spirit of monkery, for the mild and industrious spirit of pro-

protestantism. And yet the Austrian government *has* done this, and it has done it, at the very time when it was endeavouring to curb the power of the priests in the other parts of its dominions, and forming such establishments of education, as must sooner or later lead to Protestant principles.

The Protestants in Hungary are, it must be confessed, far behind their brethren in other countries, in industry and knowledge, and yet, notwithstanding this, and that they are only one fourth of the inhabitants of Hungary, they pay half the taxes, and are still much richer than their Catholic or Greek brethren. A striking sign, sure, if ever a striking sign there was, how much their religion corresponds with the good of the whole, and how little the court knows of its own interest. What the court has most hurt itself by, is its treatment of the Greeks, who form so large a part of the inhabitants of this country. Instead of rendering the priests of these semi-barbarians useful pastors, and thus enabling them to civilize their countrymen, and make them good members of society, all they have been solicitous about has been, now and then to convert an ambitious, or avaricious prelate, to the established church. The swarms which generally followed these

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deserters,

deferters, commonly changed nothing but their name. From being Greek barbarians they became Catholic barbarians, or, as a respectable Austrian officer said, it was only adding another mark to the forehead of the swine. In the mean time, the court troubled itself very little with the education of the Catholic, and united priesthood, and still less with that of the non-united, things which it is so much the interest of the legislature to attend to, as the surest means of improving the agriculture of the country, and promoting its exports.

The Greek priests in Hungary, and Illyria, are exactly in the same state as the Roman Catholic priests were, in the time of Charlemagne that great man, who laid the first grounds of national improvement in religion, and began his work with the priesthood. I doubt much, whether most of them can write and read, but I am sure they cannot reckon beyond three or four, without the help of their fingers, and know not the use of the pocket handkerchief. One of these shepherds of souls, a Maccdonian by birth, who valued himself much on his knowledge of the Greek, and the reputation of his countryman, Alexander, took it into his head to instruct me, as a young man, in the history of the Trojan war. He told me that a Trojan prince,

prince, having run away with a French princess, the Greek and Roman Emperors, the King of France, and the seven Electors, went to Troy, and took the city, after an astonishing long siege, by means of a wooden horse filled with armed men.—The man had heard the history by tradition, in Saloniki, or some other town of his ignorant country, but had not read a single old Greek author, or a single history. Notwithstanding this, he was looked upon as a wonder of learning by his colleagues. Spite indeed of their gross ignorance, these priests are held in greater veneration by the people, than either oracles of Delos, or Delphi were. These are true privileged thieves, who never shew a spark of understanding, but in the tricks they play to rob the people of the fruit of their toil; but are yet so convinced of their pretensions to the wool of their sheep, that they make no scruple of taking the head with it, if the patient animals will not suffer themselves to be sheared quietly. The Catholic priests, who live at any distance from the large towns, are little behind the Greeks in ignorance, and ill manners,—nor are they far behind them, in shearing the sheep. Their whole library consists of their breviary, and the only thing they study is the Latin language. I happened to converse with one of
them

them who is extremely respected in his own district, and really is distinguished for a better understanding, and better manners than the rest of them. The conversation turned on the German colonists who go into Hungary. I asked them how they treated them when they could not bear the climate. His answer was; ‘*Damus illis licentiam repatriandi.*’—And now I mention these Germans, I cannot help observing to you how extraordinary it is, that whilst a third of North America is peopled by these wandering Germans, whilst one half the inhabitants of the Cape, Batavia, and Surinam, (the two last some of the most unhealthy places any where to be found) are Germans, who thus cross extensive seas to break up waste lands, or to get hard bread in the capacity of day labourers; Hungary, which has work and bread for so many millions, should receive so few. Surely this must be owing to the prevalence of greater barbarisms than any poor priests barbarous Latin; for as to the pretended cause, unhealthiness of climate, Hungary is no more unhealthy than several other climates, and the natives know how to take precautions against the damps arising from the morasses. But the want of freedom in religion explains all; it is greatly owing to this cause that all the useful

men emigrate, and leave Hungary only the worthless ones. The great fault of this government is, that they banish the Protestants, who are the most useful part of their subjects. These indeed have little desire to settle in a country in which they must often go journies of several days, to see a priest of their own persuasion, where they are not allowed to build a church, and where the hatred towards them and their religion, effectually and perpetually excludes them from civil employments. All these hindrances are removed, under the gentle government of the Dutch and English, who of course run away with all the useful emigrants, and leave Austria only the worthless ones. The persons who settle in Hungary, are for the most part abandoned scoundrels from Bavaria, Suabia, Franconia, and the countries about the Rhine. On their arrival they commonly squander the small sums of money they have raised at home, by the sale of their estates, and as government takes little care about them, they generally die of grief, or disorders arising more from their dissipation than the climate. That part of them which happens to beg its way back again, represents the climate worse than it is, as an excuse for having left it. This also deters many people from coming. Those
 who

who have money enough, prefer America to Hungary, which by this means becomes the refuge of such only who have a few ducats to pay their passage on the Danube.

These, however, such as they are, would still be a considerable gain to so poor a country as Hungary is, if government was sufficiently interested in their fate, to provide for the distresses they must be exposed to, from the danger of the climate, and their own inexperience, and to give them some assistance in their first settlement. There should be an office established at Vienna, or Presburg, where these wanderers should be taught the first rudiments of the arts they have occasion for. They should be told in what places they are likely to meet with most of their own countrymen, as nothing promotes colonization so much, as when the new comers find persons of the same manners and language with themselves, or with whom they are connected by the ties of friendship, or relationship. The Germans, as it is well known, are so divided amongst themselves, that those of one circle look upon those of another as absolute strangers to them. All the Bavarians should therefore be settled in one district, and the inhabitants of Franconia, Suabia, &c. in so many others. Above all things,

things, they should be taught to guard against the dangers of the climate. Hungary is in itself not more unwholesome than Italy, Spain, the South of France, or any other warm country; only as there are morasses all over it, the difference betwixt the heat of the day, and the cold of the night, must of course be very sensible to a German; but he has nothing to do but to imitate the natives, who follow what instinct teaches them, and wear a warmer cloathing. The rich Hungary wines, likewise, destroy many a stranger, and they suffer still more from the very palatable, but dangerous melons, which are in such plenty that you may have them almost for nothing. Where the body is constantly weakened by the influences of a very warm sun, these fruits must be very prejudicial, and the rather, as it is the custom here to eat them without bread. Against all these danger and difficulties the emigrant should be secured.

The small sum of money which is given for the journey, is not sufficient to obviate these inconveniences; on the contrary, the emigrants should have as little ready money as possible; as they cannot know how to make a proper use of it in a new country, they must consequently either be robbed of it, or waste it.

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What they ought to be supplied with is wood for building, cattle, and corn; and it should be the peculiar duty of the civil and religious ministers of the state, to assist them in their civil and religious necessities. It must be confessed, however, that the priests and governors of Hungary, are not the people fit for this business; for if the court was to be at this expence, they would take care to be themselves the greatest gainers by it; but the court has hitherto manifested too small a desire for the cultivation of Hungary, to bestow much expence upon it; its principle has been to reap all it could, without sowing any thing. If it had not been for this, what has been spent upon the conquest of a very small part of Bavaria, would have brought in ten times more, in a much shorter time, by laying it properly out on the cultivation of Hungary.

The greatest source of confidence for a Hungarian patriot is, that his present king feels the connection betwixt his own interest and that of the state. That he knows how to value liberty, and mankind; is blinded by no prejudice, will not suffer his hands to be bound by any adherence to old customs, and has strength and resolution enough to attempt the Herculean labour of civilizing this important part of his hereditary dominions.

L E T T E R XXXI.

Vienna.

I TOLD you in my last, that the great Hungarian nobility live entirely according to our *ton*. Our fashions reach to the borders of Moldavia, and Walachia, and, from Presburg to Cronstadt, all that is called the fine world speaks our *patois*. Formerly they used their own language, at least to express common things, but every body now gives *dinès, soupès, and dejeunès*. There are balls *parè* and balls *masqué*; every town with four or five houses in it, has its *assemblèes*, and *redoutes*. The men play whist, and the women wear *poudre à la Marechale*, and have vapours. The booksellers sell Voltaire in secret, and the apothecaries sell Mercury openly. The men have an *ami de la maison* for their wives, and the wives a *filie de chambre* for their husbands. They have men cooks, and maitre d'hotels; they have ballets, comedies, and operas, and they have debts upon debts.

“ In the year 1740, when the Hungarian nobility took the field for their king Maria Theresa, the first sight of such troops struck the
French

French army with a panic. They had, indeed, often seen detachments of these *diabes d'Hongrie*, as they used to call them, but a whole army of them drawn up in battle array—unpowdered, from the general to the common soldier—half their faces covered with long whiskers—a sort of round beaver upon their heads instead of hats—without ruffles, or frills to their shirts, and without feathers—all clad in rough skins—monstrous crooked sabres ready drawn and uplifted—their eyes darting flashes of rage sharper than the beams of the naked sabres—was a sight our men had not been accustomed to see. Our oldest officers still remember the impression these terrible troops made, and how difficult it was to make the men stand against them, till they had been accustomed to their formidable appearance.

All this is now at an end, the Hungarian nobleman begins to leave off his long beard, and dresses much after the French fashion.

It is remarkable enough, that whilst in imitation of the Hungarian soldier, the Hussar has become an essential part of the Prussian army, and has also been received into the French regular troops, the true original is lost in his own country. Not one of the fourteen or fifteen
regiments

regiments of Hussars in the emperor's service is made up entirely of Hungarians. Experienced officers have, it seems, thought such regiments could no longer be of any service; it may be so, but it is certain that the Hungarian has entirely lost his spirit by discipline, for, like other wild men, he detests the artificial arms against which his strength and courage are of no avail, and if ever he shews himself in his native fierceness, it is only when the firing is over, and he comes to close engagement. Here indeed the hero sometimes starts out again. But this was not enough to make the Hungarians a match for the Prussian Hussars in the Silesian war; on the contrary, they always proved inferior to them.—After all, however, if this last change had not been made, it is certain that the present nobility of Hungary could not bring into the field, and maintain such armies as were raised in 1740.

The Esterhazy, whose estate amounts to above 600,000 guilders a year. The Palefy, Schaki, Erdoby, Sichy, Forgatsh, Kohari, Karoly, &c. and many others, who have from 100,000 to 200,000 guilders a year, are unable, notwithstanding these large estates, to live within their incomes. The expences they have

been put to, by the political alteration of manners of the last forty years, have reduced them to necessitous dependance. The court, however, does not look upon even this weakness as a sufficient security. The Hungarian regiments of infantry, amongst which there are likewise many Germans, and several regiments of Hussars, are constantly quartered in Bohemia, Moravia, and the German cities; on the contrary, several of the German regiments, particularly the heavy horse, and the dragoons, are quartered in Hungary. There is no province in the hereditary dominions of Austria, which has so many troops in it as Hungary has, in proportion to its population and exports. This may in some degree be owing to the cheapness of provision for man and horse. If it be so, in case of a war breaking out, on the confines of Germany, the court loses in a few weeks, what it has been saving by this policy for many years; for the forced marches which the cavalry are obliged to make to their places of destination, generally kill half the horses before they have got there. For my own part I have little doubt, but that the true motive of this allotment of troops are to make the Hungarians acquainted with the other members

members of the empire ; to extinguish their natural spirit by the sight of numerous armies in every part of their country ; to accustom them to subordination ; and in some degree, perhaps, to increase the consumption of the country, and so promote the circulation of coin.

The English proceed upon a quite different plan ; their principle is, to keep up as much as possible the national spirit of the troops, from an idea that the interests of the government are the same as those of the people, and that they have nothing to fear from a mutiny. Upon this ground it is, that their patriots have taken up a notion, which no doubt will soon be realized, of making every regiment provincial, by quartering it constantly in the county whose name it bears, and by suffering no man to be enlisted in it but those of that county ; whence they think, a still greater degree of attachment to the native place will be produced. The Imperial council of war would not be pleased with a project of this kind. It considers it as a stated maxim of policy, to send the soldier as far as may be from the place of his birth, and to compose the regiments of men taken from various countries. Thus different causes have different effects, and John Bull, and Squire South, still act upon different grounds.

None of the Austrian hereditary dominions have a national militia, excepting only the Bannat troops, or Illyrians; but these are only half soldiers, and their officers are at least for the most part Germans or Hungarians. In time of war, every Hungarian nobleman, in proportion to his estate, either raises a number of men, or sends the money for them to the war-department. These recruits seldom form separate bodies, but are incorporated with the rest of the army. Above all, care is taken that the soldiers should be free from all other ties, and only animated by the soul of the army, the wonder-working stick.

You must not however conceive this *Palladium* of the Austrian army, this wonder-working stick, as the absolute *sine quo non*. A few years since, indeed, it ruled the great machine altogether; but now that has been brought into regular movements, it is only looked up to with reverential awe and submission. According to a proclamation of the humane Emperor, the officers are to make as little *physical* use of it as possible. But as to *moral* purposes, it is in all its glory, and its idea takes place, in the common soldier, of all love of his country, all good humour, all sense of honour all hope of advancement, and every other feeling.

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All his occupations bring him back to this idea, and from his A, B, C, to his logic, all he knows is comprised in the two little words, *thou must*.

There cannot be a doubt, but in obedience, and strong subordination, the principal strength of an army consists ; but is it impossible to unite them with any idea of feeling for self, in the subaltern and underling? Are sentiments of personal honour, of bravery, and of patriotism, entirely prejudicial to an army? Certainly not: and were it only to meliorate the condition of the poor foldier, were it only to make his hard fate less severe, it should be the policy of princes to promote those feelings which can sweeten so many bitter hours, and alone enable them to meet death.

With the power which Austria now possesses, it might at one stroke cut off all the privileges of the Hungarian nobles, which are contrary to the good of the whole, and which it has been so many years endeavouring to undermine. A few hundred families would murmur for a few years, but the thing would not go beyond murmurs ; the inhabitants of towns, and the peasants, would stand up for the interests of the court, which are their own. The religious animosities, which formerly served as a pretence

for an insurrection, no longer blinds the people to their real good; and open, liberal treatment, would soon win over the nobility, whom the artifices now in use only alienate and corrupt. If once that part of their privileges, which militate against the good of the whole, were well defined, and suppressed by one single act of authority, they would then become susceptible of patriotic virtues; whereas, at present, they look upon the government as hostile to them, and do nothing but what they are compelled to by power or bribes. In that case, the multitude of the nation would not be the most abject slaves, nor the great the most cruel despots that are known. If, besides this, the court was to spend the sums necessary on establishments for education, and the priests of the several religions would endeavour to establish them without persecution, or partiality, in the next century, Hungary would be one of the most flourishing countries in Europe. The Hungarian would no longer be poor, in the middle of a country abounding with every necessary of life. The poverty of the people, and the excessive riches of the nobility, would no longer offend the eyes of the humane by the shocking disproportion between them. Then the court also would no longer object to the raising

raising provincial regiments, as it would be consistent with its interests. The lively Croat, or Hungarian, animated by the love of his country, and a sense of duty, would no longer refuse to submit to proper discipline; all the army would be inspired with a spirit, which discipline alone cannot give, but which united to discipline, is the strongest security for terror abroad, and happiness at home.

The Hungarians, in general, are extremely proper for a military life; they want nothing to be perfect soldiers, but the kind of education which a good government might give them. The Croats particularly have all the requisites for service. Their mean height is six feet; they are bony, fleshy, quick, and lively, and can bear the extremes of cold and hunger. In a word, there are no better made men in Europe, notwithstanding which, they are the most miserable part of the Imperial army; a sure sign that government either neglects them, or does not know how to discipline them properly. Sometimes it has been proposed to incorporate them with other corps, but this would only be to take away their natural advantages, and furnish them with artificial ones in their stead. Such a change would put an end to their usual way of life, to which they are indebted for
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their hardiness. They commonly dwell six or seven families under the same roof. As their frugality enables them to bring up many children, they marry early, in the vigour of their youth, and their children are the produce of their unimpaired manhood. Their juices are still uncorrupt, and the destructive distempers which poison the sources of life, are not yet introduced amongst them. The patriarchal government still subsists amongst them, and the grandfather, who has grown old amidst his children and grandchildren, still retains an authority over them. As by this means their manners are preserved uncorrupt, nothing more is requisite than to humanize their priests; this would render them useful subjects to the state, without commerce, manufactures, or arts, which the court has lately endeavoured to introduce amongst them, in my opinion not to their advantage. An education more suitable to the nature of their country, and their peculiar constitution, would by degrees deprive them of their natural ferocity, and they would become the more tractable, in proportion as they acquired better notions of religion, agriculture, and the other things connected with their well being. Their ferocity, the natural consequence of their barbarity, is the true reason why they
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are so averse to discipline, and the only way of getting the better of this, and making them like the other subjects of the house of Austria, fit for military service, is domestic education: this alone can bring them out of their barbarity, without depriving them of their other advantages.

Suppose the new court was to adopt the other plan, and incorporate them with the other troops, suppose it was to make slaves of them in the best years of their lives, and when the voice of nature crieth most loud, what would be the consequence? Accustomed to all the vices which obtain in a standing army, they would consume the vigour of their lives in pernicious indulgencies; they would return to their native country corrupted with a variety of wants they did not know before. Having acquired a taste for the pleasures of forbidden love, they would either not marry at all, or marry later than their ancestors; all their domestic ordinances would be abolished, nor would their wives be any longer distinguished for their chastity. Their children would imitate them in their vices, and the consequence of all would be, that in the second generation you would hardly be able to distinguish them; and in the third, or at most, the fourth, not know them at all from the other subjects of
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the empire, so totally would they have lost the size, strength, frugality, and fine form, which now so eminently distinguish them. To attempt the change proposed, would be taking a dangerous leap from barbarous to civil life, and all that could be expected from it would be a broken limb, if not a broken neck.

L E T T E R XXXIII.

Vienna.

I HAVE given myself all the trouble possible to come at an exact estimate of the goods annually exported from, and imported into Hungary, and by that means to acquire a tolerable idea of the national riches; but the receipts of the customs, the only ones by which you can form a good judgment, are either so imperfectly or so secretly kept, that there is no depending upon them. All I can therefore say upon the subject must consist of report and conjecture.—I was assured then by a creditable man, that the exports amounted to twenty-four, and the imports to eighteen millions a year, making a balance of six millions in favour of the country. With respect to the exports, I can say nothing upon them with certainty, for the reason I have just given; they are, indeed, greater than I could have imagined, even from the positive calculations I have been able to make; but if we compare the exports and imports, we shall find it is impossible but that the former should be stated too high; for with

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such a balance of trade as Hungary must by this means have, it ought to be one of the richest countries in Europe, whereas nothing is scarcer than money in this country. Of the twenty millions of revenue which Hungary, together with Transylvania and Illyria contributes to the state, three at the most comes to Vienna, and the sums which the few noble families that reside out of it carry from the country, are replaced by what foreigners in employment spend in it; many millions therefore must remain in Hungary, and if to these are added, such a balance of trade as I have stated, supposing it only to have continued five years, the country must be much richer than it is.

If we consider a little the variety of commodities which Hungary must import from abroad, it is impossible it should have even an equal trade; it is obliged to purchase almost all the productions of art, besides an astonishing number of those of nature. Clothes alone cost four or five millions of florins per annum; wrought silks, linens and cottons as much more; coffee and sugar must at least come to two millions and a half; tin, glass, colours, and drugs, must cost them annually many millions. In this estimate we do not take in toys of every kind; foreign wines for the liquorish palates of the great men,
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who cannot be contented with the admirable produce of their own vineyards ; foreign horses, coaches, harnesses, and a great many other foreign articles. The quantity of the natural productions, which Hungary, on the other hand, gives the stranger, cannot come up to any thing like the sums these articles must cost. According to a rough calculation I have made, Hungary exports the value of about five millions and a half of oxen, swine and horses, four millions of corn, hay, &c. three millions of wine, half a million's worth of tobacco, silk (mostly from Sclavonia), citrons, chesnuts, and other fruits ; and some millions of minerals, especially copper ; so that if I set the exports at sixteen, and the imports at eighteen millions, it will be much nearer the truth.

I do not think I do Hungary any injustice by thus stating its expences at two millions ; its situation, and the nature of its government, prevent it from making all the use possible of the rich treasures it possesses ; and the high degree of luxury which obtains in all orders prevents its owing to its own industry several articles which it procures from the stranger, though it might prepare them itself. Having just told you the great sums annually paid for clothes, it will perhaps astonish you to hear, that there is

no country in Europe fitter for breeding sheep than this is. Prince Eugene, who was as great a judge of political improvements as he was a general, perceived this, and having procured sheep from Arabia, gave himself all the trouble possible to propagate the breed in the country of Ofen. The Emperors Charles, and Francis, made many wise regulations for the same purpose; but hitherto it has been unsuccessful. The nobility, who possess almost all the lands, are too proud and foolish to attend to agriculture; the farmers have no property, and the inhabitants of the towns are depressed by religious persecutions.

The negligence of the police in not stemming the torrent of luxury is inconceivable. I have often been tempted to believe, that government did not think it worth its while to attend to the circumstances of this country, either because it did not yield in proportion to its greatness, or that the impetuous temper of the court was such, as not to allow of any establishments that were to produce fruit in after ages: be this as it may, whether the court is all for present enjoyment, or has not political wisdom enough to erect for futurity, the instances of its neglect are most glaring. I will lay one of them before you: Notwithstanding the extreme poverty of the country,

country, they allow the Jews to go about with coffee, sugar, tobacco, oil, and quack medicines of all kinds, from village to village, where they sell them in small quantities, and much adulterated.

The climate of the southern part of Hungary is extremely favourable to the growth of silk; but except in Sclavonia, which is not improved as it ought to be; there grows none, notwithstanding the example of their neighbours the Venetians, and the facility of procuring mulberry trees from Italy. The only art which is carried to any degree of improvement is that of mining. Here all that mathematics could do has been adopted. You would be astonished at the sight of the machines in use to clear the water from the pits, and to carry on the other necessary operations. The gold and silver mines of Cremnitz and Shemnitz produce but little to the crown, owing to its keeping part of them in its own hands, and not farming the whole. There are other gold and silver mines in the country, but those of Transylvania excel them all at present, and promise to do still more so in future. I believe, however, that the court gets much more by the copper than it does by the gold and silver mines, especially since the custom of sheathing the men of war with copper

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per has prevailed. Hungary is able to furnish all Europe with copper ; upon the whole, half of the four millions of florins which the country gets by its mines comes from Hungary.

The country has an extraordinary appearance ; it is inclosed on all sides with high hills, in the midst of which are plains, which you may travel through for some days without perceiving the least elevation. You meet with immense deserts, in the midst of which, as in those of Tartary, are wild horses. The woods are filled with wolves, an animal scarce ever seen in Suabia, Bavaria, or Austria. Near the banks of rivers, in the plains, there are morasses, which here and there form lakes ; the drying up of these will be a great advantage to the country, by making its rivers navigable, adding great quantities of land to it, and purifying the air. The beasts are all very different from those of Germany ; the horses are small, light, and not handsome, but uncommonly lively and strong ; a Hungarian uses only three or four in going from Vienna to Turkey, in a constant trot or gallop ; their breed has been greatly improved in the studs of the nobility, in several parts of the country. The oxen are the largest and most beautiful I have ever seen ; they are all ash-colour, or white, and I do not recollect to have

have seen a red or brown one in the whole country; their flesh is remarkably well tasted; even the poultry, are distinguished from those of other countries by their size and shape: In short, all that has breath here, attests, either by its growth or its agility, the wonderful vigour of nature.

The artificial appearance of the country is as remarkable as the natural. In one place, perhaps, you see palaces upon which art has exhausted all its magnificence, and within a few paces you come to countries where men dwell in caverns underground like the wild beasts. At Presburg, Port, and Offen, which are the largest cities in the country, and each of which contains 30,000 men, you believe yourself in the most enchanting country in the world; and within a few miles of their gates, you seem to be in Mingrelia.

The strongest proof possible, that the country is miserable, is the contrast of extreme poverty with extreme riches, and the more striking that contrast is the greater is the misery. A people may be very poor, and yet very happy; but when amidst straw huts, which hardly protect their inhabitants from wind and weather, you see marble palaces towering to the clouds, when in the midst of immense wildernesses tenanted by miserable skeletons, who hardly find

roots in the fields to keep body and soul together, you meet with gardens with fountains in them, grottos, parterres, terrasses, statues, and costly pictures; it is a sure sign that one part of the inhabitants live by pillaging the rest.

Not long after my arrival here, I made a party of pleasure to the castle of Count Esterhazy, which lies at about a day's journey from Presburg. Without a doubt, you are already acquainted with it from Moore's travels. There is no place in France, Versailles alone excepted, so magnificent as this; the castle is immensely large, and full of every sumptuous article of expence that can be conceived. The garden contains every thing that human wit has invented for the improvement, or, as you may call it, the perversion of nature. The pavilions of all kinds appear like the habitations of so many fairies, and every thing is so much above what you meet with in general, that you think you are dreaming when you behold it. I shall not attempt to give you an exact description of what I saw here, but must, however, observe, that to the eyes of one, who does not profess himself a connoisseur, there appeared to be somewhat too much. I recollect, that the walls of a *Sala-Terrina* were painted with figures twelve feet high, which to a son of the earth, as I am, appeared

peared much too lofty for the size of the room. I know how much you are for the great style, and remember all you used to din into my profane ears about the fine forms of the Roman school, but yet, I think if you had been here, you would have thought this rather too great a style.

What renders the magnificence of this place still more striking, is the very extraordinary contrast of it with the country round. The lake of *Neufiedler*, which is not far from the castle, forms a large morass, which extends for the space of several miles, and threatens in time to lay the great edifice under water, as it has already done great part of the country, which was formerly very productive. The inhabitants of the country round have the appearance of so many ghosts, and are regularly plagued with agues every year. About half the money which the prince has laid out in beautifying his castle, would not only have been sufficient to drain the fens, but would have taken as much land again from the lake. As this is ever upon the encrease, there is great reason to fear it will entirely overflow the low country: the only way to prevent this, will be by making a canal to communicate with the Danube, an enterprize which would do the prince more

honour than all the trifles he has been about. Within less than a day's journey from the castle, on the other side, you will meet the Kalmucks, Cherokees, Hottentots, and inhabitants of *Terra del Fuego*, in all their several occupations and situations.

Unwholesome as the country is, particularly in spring and winter, and though the prince himself has the ague very often, yet is he thoroughly satisfied, that there is not a finer, or more wholesome spot under the sun. His castle stands quite alone, and he sees nobody but dependants, or strangers who come for the purpose of admiration. The prince has a puppet-show theatre, which is really extraordinary in its kind, for the puppets perform whole operas. You really do not know whether you should wonder or laugh most, when you see the *Didone*, the *Alceste* at *Bivio*, played throughout by puppets. The prince's orchestra is one of the best I have yet heard. The great Haydn is his compositor; and he has got a poet, who is often very fortunate. The scene-painters too are distinguished men; in a word, the thing itself is little, but all the appendages are very great. The prince often hires a company of strolling players, and keeps them for a month to play to him, and his servants compose all the audience.

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These gentlemen appear upon the stage with their hair about their ears, and the dresses it pleases sporting fortune to furnish them with at the time; but it all does very well, for the prince is not fond of grand tragic movements, but on the contrary, delights in any extempore pieces of wit, which these gentlemen may strike out, or which may be struck out for them. This prince has also a body-guard, composed of very fine men. I was very sorry that I could not see the famous Haydn, who was gone to Vienna to conduct a large concert. It is said, the prince has given him permission to make a journey to England, France, and Spain, where he will be received as his merits deserve, and get enough to come home with his purse well filled. He has a brother, who is *Maestro di Capella* at Strasburg, a man of as much genius as Haydn himself, but who has not industry enough to arrive at the same degree of reputation.

L E T T E R XXXIV.

Vienna.

I SHOULD not have said so much of Hungary, had I not recollected, that you consider it as an unknown country. What I have to say of the other parts of the hereditary dominions of the House of Austria will be so much the shorter.

Austria, properly so called, has throughout the appearance of a happy country; here are no signs of the striking contrast betwixt poverty and riches, which offends so much in Hungary. All the inhabitants, those of the capital only excepted, enjoy that happy mediocrity, which is the consequence of a gentle and wise administration. The farmer has property; and the rights of the nobility, who enjoy a kind of lower judicial power, are well defined. The south and south-west parts of the country are bounded by a ridge of hills, the inhabitants of which enjoy a share of prosperity, unknown to those of the interior parts of France. I saw several villages on the banks of the Danube, whose inhabitants dwelt in stone houses. A sure sign
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of their well-being, is their eating meat almost every day, and roast meat once or twice a week. There are many villages and market towns, the inhabitants of which have bought themselves off from vassalage, are now their own governors, and belong some of them to the estates of the country; amongst these is the beautiful town of Stockeraw, about which is one of the prettiest countries I have yet seen. The cloysters, the prelates of which belong to the estates of the country, are the richest in Germany, after the immediate *prelacies* and *abbacies* of the empire.

The cloysters are some of the richest in Germany. One of the great convents of Benedictines is worth upwards of four thousand millions of French livres, half of which goes to the exchequer of the country. A monk of this cloyster, with whom I was conversing on the state of religion, endeavoured to convince me of its decrease since the reign of Charles VI. by telling me, that in those times they paid only five or six thousand florins to the state, whereas now they pay near ten times as much. There are no great hopes that this thermometer will stand still under the present emperor; on the contrary, it is rather to be feared that it will fall to nothing; Klosterneuburg, Polten, Gottevaich,

and some other prelacies, are as warm as that I have just mentioned.

Lower Austria yearly exports more than two millions worth of guilders of wine to Moravia, Bohemia, Upper Austria, Bavaria, Saltzburg, and part of Styria and Carinthia. This wine is sour, but has a great deal of strength, and may be carried all over the world without danger; when it is ten or twenty years old it is very good. Notwithstanding this, however, all this trade would be knocked up at a blow, if the exportation of the Hungary wines was not restrained by severe prohibitions.

These limitations, of which I have said something to you in a former letter, make part of a plan, which was probably originally devised by the priests, and which the nobles have helped them to make perfect. It is an ancient law, that the peasant shall introduce no alterations on his estate. He is not allowed to root up his vines and turn his land to tillage or pasture. There is no doubt, but this extraordinary law took its rise from the tithes paid to the clergy; as these were always to be paid in kind, they of course opposed every degree of alteration. Were the law now to be altered, many estates would certainly lose a great deal by it, but others would be increased in proportion; for instance, a great
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number of the saffron fields, the cultivation of which is always troublesome and expensive, would be turned to other and better purposes. Even in Krems, where the best saffron grows, the inhabitants complain exceedingly of being obliged to cultivate this commodity. There are likewise several other articles, such as flax, hemp, tobacco, and the like, which the farmer might grow were it not for this prohibition, which also prevents him from taking the advantage of the markets, and varying the produce of his land in proportion as the value of the things changes. With regard to agriculture itself, every species of prohibition is detrimental; all that the legislature has to do is to remove natural obstacles; when this is done nature will do the rest of herself. This country is very well peopled. Mr. Schloffer, in his political journal, which contains an account of the population of Austria, estimates that of this country at 2,100,000 men. For my part, I consider this estimate as much too large; but the fact is, that partly from the ignorance, and partly from the pride of people here, who love to swell and magnify every thing that belongs to the country, it is extremely difficult to get at the truth. A stranger, however, who has been here some time, and has studied whatever belongs to the country

try very accurately, assured me that the population of Upper and Under Austria together did not amount to more than 1,800,000 men. If you include the inhabitants of the capital in the number, still this will be a very considerable population.

The revenue of this country is about 14,000,000 of florins, of which the city of Vienna contributes above five, as one man in the capital earns as much as three in the country.

The southern parts of Austria are covered with hills, which rise gradually from the banks of the Danube to the borders of Stiria, and are covered with woods. They lose themselves in the mass of mountains which run to the south of Germany, and stretch through all Stiria, Carniola, Carinthia, and Tyrol, to the Swiss Alps, and are probably after Savoy and Switzerland, the highest part of the earth.

The inhabitants of this extensive ridge of mountains are all very much alike, they are a strong, large, and, the *goitres* excepted, a very handsome people. The people of Tyrol, whom I visited in an excursion from Munich, distinguish themselves by their diligence. Some drive a trade with figures made of stucco as far as Holland; others make works in stone and wood for the churches; another part of them travel
through

through Germany with Italian wares and fruits, and bring home a large quantity of money. A fourth set deals in quack drugs, salves, wonder-working pills, effences, tinctures, &c.

Notwithstanding its woods and the hills covered with snow, Tyrol is well inhabited and well peopled. It contains about six hundred thousand souls, and pays the state about three millions of florins. • The silver and copper works at Schwaz are one of the most profitable things in the Emperor's hereditary dominions, and the salt works at Halle yield annually about three hundred thousand florins.

Inspruck is a fine city, containing fourteen thousand inhabitants. Boffen is the most considerable after this. They had formerly very fine fairs, but these have been entirely ruined by the customs; all Tyrol complains of, and curses the customs.

The Carinthians excel the other inhabitants of these mountains in strength and size. They are like their horses, which are reckoned the strongest in Europe, and never tire. Their bread is made of maize; and their land produces the best steel known, which the English use for their finest works. The population consists of four hundred thousand souls. The inhabitants of Carinthia, Gortz, and the Austrian Istria, may be set
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at five hundred thousand. Stiria contains about seventy thousand inhabitants. Gratz, the capital, is a fine city; there are persons in it who have from thirty to forty thousand florins income, and the luxury that prevails is not to be described. They have four regular meals, viz. at morning, noon, evening, and night. Ducks and chickens are the ordinary food of the common citizens. They made me almost sick only with the sight of their pasties, tarts, ragouts, &c. They talk of nothing but the kitchen and the cellar; and, their attention to the preparation of their dinners only excepted, do not seem many degrees above orang-outangs. The other luxuries are in proportion. This is the great mart for all indecent and irreligious books. Hence they are exported into the rest of the country. You find villages in Tyrol entirely inhabited by statuaries; they will, however, always be more famous for their capons than their learning. You may have a capon here for twenty creutzers, a pair of fine chickens for ten or twelve, a bottle of very good wine for twelve, and a pound of rye bread for one. Gratz and the suburbs contain about thirty thousand inhabitants.

The country is cultivated to the top of the highest hills. Though pasturage is the principal business of the people, the land produces corn enough to nourish its numerous inhabitants, or if there is ever the least want, they are supplied from Hungary almost for nothing. The flax and hemp, which have been introduced here, as well as in Carinthia, are extremely good, and produce very large sums. The mines employ a great number of people, and as they are worked very cheap answer extremely well. Indeed the whole of the country is favourable to this kind of business. The hills are covered with wood, which in general costs no more than the expence of cutting down and transporting to the place where it is to be used in the furnaces. Sometimes too it is floated by the rivers without any expence of transporting at all. The numerous brooks in the valleys afford opportunities of erecting the furnaces near the pits, so that every thing contributes to save expence. The best mineral of the country is iron, of which they make an excellent steel.

The numbers of those who have the *goitre*, and the size of it, is more remarkable in Stiria than in Carinthia, Ukrania, or the Tyrol. Some think this disorder owing in part to the snow
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and ice water, and in part to the particles of earth and stone with which the wells of the country are impregnated. Others will have it, that it arises from the custom of seasoning the meat a great deal, and drinking cold water afterwards. I beg leave to add a fourth cause, and leave all to operate together for the production of this phenomenon.

The cause I mean is the cold, to which all the inhabitants are exposed. You know that the solar rays, being reflected on all sides by the hills which encompass the valleys, occasion an extraordinary heat. I recollect, as I have been wandering through narrow valleys, to have breathed an air so glowing, that it seemed to come from a furnace. Whenever, therefore, there is the least motion in the air, the pressure will make it more sensibly felt than on higher vales or hills, where it can expand more; the cold is consequently greater. Now as these people commonly go with their necks and throats bare, whenever there is a cool current, the weak part of the throat is the first attacked by the moisture, and the perspiration there is stopped.

It is an observation which has been made in Valois, Savoy, and other countries, that the inhabitants of the lower vallies are more exposed to this evil, than those which live higher up.

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This, no doubt, must be owing to the more frequent changes of air in the low grounds, whereas higher up it always continues cool. There are also a kind of idiots in this country, who can hardly speak, and are only fit for the labours of the field. Their number is great, and the neglect with which they are treated, whilst they are young, may probably have tended to increase their stupidity.

All the inhabitants of these hills are freemen, who have long since shaken off the feudal yoke, under which the greatest part of Europe still groans. The marks of their freedom are very visible, for, ill as this country has been treated by nature, in comparison with its neighbour Hungary, it is every where much better cultivated, and more populous than the latter. When you see the farmer here force his nourishment from the almost bare rocks, and think of the beautiful plains in Hungary that lay waste and uncultivated, the value of property and liberty strikes you in its full force. These countries and Austria are not half as large as Hungary, and yet they not only yield a much greater revenue than that does, but there is an appearance of easy circumstances throughout, of which the Hungarians have no notion. O that governors

vernors would but see how much the interest of the governed is united with their own !

The characteristic of the inhabitants of all this country is striking bigotry, united with striking sensuality. You need only see what is going forwards here to be convinced, that the religion taught by the monks, is as ruinous for the morals as it is repugnant to Christianity. The Cicisbeos accompany the married women from their beds to church, and lead them to the very confessional.—The pilgrimage to Mariazell is a ceremony half religious and half profane, with which the ladies of Gratz are highly delighted. Their lovers generally accompany them there ; in short, it is to the people of this country, what Bath, and the other water-drinking places, are to the rest of Europe. A friend of mine had the honour to accompany a lady who went there with her lover. As it was expected that the next day, being the feast of the Virgin, there would be great crowds at confession, the lady was asked, whether it would not be better to expedite matters over night : ‘ No,’ answered she, ‘ for if I do, I shall have to confess again to-morrow morning, before I can go to the sacrament with a pure conscience.’ She was pressed to anticipate a confession, but this it seems would not do. The women of fashion
make

make no more scruple of speaking of their lovers in public companies than those of Vienna do. A *cicisbeo* is, it seems, as much the fashion, as Hungary water. The women of this place are not like the French ones, who let their lovers languish a great while; on the contrary, they are easily gained. Their lovers are chiefly officers, or high churchmen, between which orders, on this account, there is a constant rivalry and jealousy.

The bigotry of the public in these parts, which, from the mixture of gallantry with it, is still to be found even amongst people of rank, degenerates amongst the common people into the grossest and most abominable buffoonery. The *Windes*, who are mixed with the Germans in these countries, distinguish themselves by a superstitious custom, that does little honour to the human understanding, and would be incredible, if we had not the most unequivocal proofs of the fact before our eyes. Many years ago, they set out, in company with some Hungarian enthusiasts, to Cologne on the Rhine, which is about one hundred and twenty German miles distant, to cut off the beard of a crucifix there. Every seven years this operation is repeated, as in this space of time the beard grows again to its former length. The rich persons of the as-

sociation send the poorer ones as their deputies; and the magistrates of Cologne receive them as ambassadors from a foreign prince. They are entertained at the expence of the state, and a counsellor shews them the most remarkable things in the town. I know not whether we ought to laugh most, at the remote town of Cologne, or at those poor peasants. There is, indeed, some excuse for the former, as the farce brings in large sums of money at stated times, and may therefore deserve political encouragement, but still, however, it is the most miserable, and meanest way of gain that can be imagined. These *Windes* have alone the right to shave our Saviour, and the beard grows only for them. They firmly believe, that if they did not do this service to the crucifix, the earth would be shut to them for the next seven years, and there would be no harvests. For this reason they are obliged to carry the hair home with them, as the proof of having fulfilled their commission, the returns of which are distributed amongst the different communities, and preserved as holy reliques. The Imperial court has for a long time endeavoured in vain to prevent this emigration, which deprives agriculture of so many useful hands. When the *Windes* could not go openly, they would go clandestinely. At length the court thought

of the expedient of forbidding the regency of Cologne to let them enter the town. This happened six years ago, and the numerous embassy was obliged, to beg its way back again without the wonderful beard, (which, without doubt, the capuchins, to whom the crucifix belonged, used to put together from their own). In future, they will not, most probably, run the danger of travelling so far for nothing. I do not hear but that, since this accident, the corn has come up as well as it did before; but whether the beard is still growing, or not, I cannot say.—I could give you still more striking traits of the superstition of the inhabitants of the inner parts of Austria, but as this surpasses them all, it may serve as a sufficient measure of the human understanding in these parts. The trade which the monks carry on with holy salves, oils, &c. is still very considerable; a prohibition of the court, lately published, has rather lessened it, but it cannot be entirely suppressed till next generation. It is now carried on secretly, but perhaps to nearly as great an amount as formerly.

L E T T E R XXXV.

Vienna.

AS there were some of the provinces of the hereditary dominions of the house of Austria which I did not visit, you must content yourself with such accounts of their population and commerce, as I have been able to collect, partly from public papers, and partly from conversations with sensible men. In order to give you an idea of their comparative merits, we will first cast our eyes upon the whole. Mr. Schloffer, whose useful letters I have already mentioned, and shall have occasion to speak more of hereafter, gives a list of the respective populations of the Austrian monarchy, according to which, the whole amounts to twenty-seven millions. I fancy he is now convinced himself that his correspondent saw the subjects of Austria through a magnifying glass. As several parts of this list have been amended from better accounts: thus, for instance, in Austrian Poland and Bukowina, they now reckon only 2,800,000 souls; whereas, in the first lists, they were reckoned at 3,900,000.

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The first number of these *Political Letters* contains another list, which seems to me to approach much nearer to the truth ; for though the population of particular parts may be laid too high, this is made up for, by the omission of the particular provinces of Illyria and Bukowina, which are entirely left out. The following list I have, in a great measure, from the best hands :

Hungary, with the now annexed				
Temeswar	-	-	-	364,900,000 souls
Illyria	-	-	-	1,400,000
Transylvania	-	-	-	1,000,000
Austrian Poland, together with Buko-				
wina	-	-	-	2,800,000
Bohemia	-	-	-	2,100,000
Moravia	-	-	-	1,000,000
Silesia	-	-	-	200,000
Upper and Lower Austria, and Styria				700,000
Carniola, Ukrania, Gorts, and Istria				1,000,000
Farther Austria and Falkenstein	-			300,000
Tyrol	-	-	-	600,000
Netherlands	-	-	-	1,800,000
Lombardy	-	-	-	1,200,000
				<hr/>
				19,500,000

I will not insist upon it that this list is so accurate as to make it a great violation of truth, to give round numbers, and state the whole at twenty millions ; but I would not believe in

more than twenty millions, if all the privy counsellors in the empire said it together.

It only requires eyes to see, that the territories of Austria are not so well peopled throughout as France is. The difference in the size of the two countries is inconsiderable. How then is it possible that Austria should be as well peopled as France (which hardly contains twenty-four millions), when the greatest part of it has no considerable manufactures, and, in great part of Hungary and Poland, there are not even hands to do the necessary work? Agriculture, in however flourishing state it be in a country, does not render it as populous as manufactures do. The sphere of the former is contracted, that of the latter not. You would fill a large tract of country with the men who inhabit one of our large manufacturing towns. But besides this, the agriculture of Hungary and Austrian Poland, which make above one half of the Imperial dominions, is not nearly so good as that of most of our provinces. In France the towns are at least as full again of inhabitants as those of the Austrian dominions, and yet the country, take it altogether, is well peopled. It is only those parts of the hereditary dominions of Austria, that are German,
which

which can vie with France in agriculture and population.

Some of the *data* on which the lists which make the population of Austria amount to twenty-seven millions are founded, are truly ridiculous. For instance, Mr. Schlosser's correspondent will have it, that the Austrian Netherlands contain 4,000,000; though the United Netherlands, which are so much larger, and most uncommonly peopled, do not contain more than 2,500,000 inhabitants. The circumference of all the Austrian Netherlands contains, at most, 500 German square miles. According to this account, therefore, each square mile would contain 8000 men; and as Luxemburg, and the northern parts of Brabant, are confessedly but thinly peopled, the remaining provinces must have at least 10,000 souls in every square mile; a population, I will venture to say, not to be met with in any part of Europe, the environs of London, Naples, and Paris, not excepted. In a journey I made to Holland, I was assured, from good information at Brussels, that the population of the Austrian Netherlands amounted only to 1,800,000 souls, and this is a great deal; as even, according to this statement, there will be 3,600 men for every geographical German square mile.

The statement of the income of the house of Austria, which Mr. Schlosser gives us, is accurate as far as it goes, but is not quite perfect. He does not reckon Illyria, Lombardy, and the Netherlands; and the exports from Hungary and Transylvania are put rather under the mark. I fancy the following will turn out a pretty accurate account:

Bannat	-	-	-	-	1,500,000 Imperial
Transylvania	-	-	-	-	3,000,000
Illyria	-	-	-	-	2,000,000
Poland, together with Bukowina					1,200,000
Bohemia	-	-	-	-	11,600,000
Moravia	-	-	-	-	400,000
Silesia	-	-	-	-	700,000
All the circles of Austria	-				22,700,000
Netherlands	-	-	-	-	7,000,000
Lombardy	-	-	-	-	4,000,000
					<hr/>
					82,000,000

These 82,000,000 of Imperial guilders make about 98,400,000 Rhenish guilders, or about 215,000,000 of French livres; which is about 145,000,000 livres less than the income of our court (the colonies not included), and about as much as the revenue of Great Britain. When we consider that France contains about 4,000,000 more inhabitants than Austria does, that its commerce is much more flourishing,
and

and that Hungary and Illyria yield so little, in proportion to their size, the proportion of the produce of the two countries will be thought pretty near the truth.

The account of the expenditures, which Mr. Schloffer's correspondent has subjoined to his account of the revenue, is notoriously false. The expences of the army are laid at 17,000,000 of guilders; but though, in proportion to the strength of the two countries, the army of this court costs a third less than ours does, the Emperor's military expences, including the large magazines, and recruiting money, come to 28,000,000 a year. Some persons of credit make the sum still larger. Mr. Schloffer's correspondent states the pensions only at a million; but it is easy to see, that as much again may be given in pensions, and yet none of those who must necessarily subsist by the bounty of the court be much richer. Besides all this, the account of the expenditure must be false; for Mr. Schloffer's correspondent has made it agree with the revenue, which he has stated at 27,000,000 guilders less than it really is.

I recollect to have read, in a speech, spoken in parliament by an English minister, who wanted to shew the rank his country held in the system, a comparative state of the revenues of
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the several great powers in Europe. He estimated the revenue of France at twelve, that of Great Britain at nine, that of Russia at seven, and that of Austria at six millions sterling. This is silly enough; but it is not as absurd as what is said by Linguet, who, in his annals of Europe, ventures to entertain a doubt, whether Austria has power enough to secure the west of Europe from the danger of a Turkish invasion; and therefore graciously advises the other European powers to help this house to a slice of Germany or Turkey, in order to enable it to measure spears with the Turk. Austria is still, without doubt, the second power of Europe. The revenue of Russia consists of 32,000,000 of rubles, which, according to the present value of the ruble, does not amount to more than 64,000,000 of Imperial guilders. No doubt but Russia may do astonishing things with its income at home, where the first necessities of life are all so cheap; but it has not nearly the number of resources, to carry on operations out of its own borders, as this court has. The times of Leopold and Charles VI. have long been gone by. Within this last twenty years, a change has taken place in the administration of the Imperial finances, which will astonish the world, as soon as this court has an opportunity of shewing

shewing its power. I do not believe it wants as much time as Russia wanted, when it began the last war, to be a full match for the Turks. As the revenue of Great Britain was nearly equal to that of this country, previous to the breaking out of this war, but has been a little lessened by the loss of America, Austria has no rival to fear, even at present, but France; but the former is a rising power, and in fifty years time, the two crowns will be nearly equally strong. Though it be true, that Russia does contain some millions of men more than the Austrian monarchy, there are amongst the former several Kamtschatdales, Samoides, and Laplanders, who are of little more political estimation than their cattle. Both powers are making hasty strides to greatness, and in the next century, will probably play the parts, which France and England played, from the end of the last to the middle of this, that is, the quiet and balance of Europe will depend upon them. This court will not suffer the Russian to take one step, without taking the same, or perhaps two, as was the case in the partition of Poland, which I now know for certain, originated in this country. Russia bore all the expence of the Turkish, or to say better, of the Polish war; and

and when matters came to a division, Austria gained more than Russia and Prussia together. The Austrian part of Poland, together with Bukowina, which was taken from the Turks, is not larger than the share which Russia had; but it contains more men, and produces at least half as much again as the Russian and Prussian parts put together. According to the best accounts, the Russian part contains only 2,100,000, and the Prussian 650,000; whereas in the Austrian, as I have stated them, there are 2,800,000 souls. Besides this larger population, Austria has likewise the advantage of the very productive salt-works of Wielitska, and the greatest part of Poland is dependent upon it for this necessary of life. The strength of Austria is compact; but that of Russia is broken. They talk here of a partition of Turkey, as a thing resolved on by the two Imperial courts, and even the public papers begin to mention it; but I do not believe it, as it is well known that there was a plan of the same kind formed by the two courts in the year 1730. Should there, however, be any thing in it, and should not our court have a power to conjure the storm, this would probably be the last treaty of friendship between Austria and Russia; for as soon as the Porte shall

shall be destroyed, and the two Christian empires have their limits on the borders of the Black Sea, they must of necessity grow jealous of each other, as with respect to trade, and other circumstances, they will be exactly in the same situation as France and Great Britain were in, with regard to each other.

L E T T E R XXXVI.

Vienna.

BY degrees the Emperor begins to shew a little of the plan which he has so long kept concealed in his own breast. You must not expect me to give you a circumstantial account of the new regulations which have appeared, or will appear in future. I think of leaving this town next week; but you will have quicker, and more complete intelligence from the newspapers, than I can give you on my travels. Certainly our chaste French Gazette is not the channel to convey matters of this kind to you; it will, indeed, inform you very circumstantially, that the Emperor went one day to church, another day a hunting, and a third to the concert; that he let his hand be kissed, and what coat, or great coat he wore in one and the other place. You will not hear, by this channel, of the laws relating to toleration, of the abolition of cloisters, of the diminution of the papal authority; you will not hear that liberty is promised to every sectary to worship God in his own way; that Austria has become independent of all foreign influence; that monkery
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is no more; that the clergy are become the servants of the state: the abolition, too, of feudal tenures; the diminution of the pernicious privileges of the nobles; the reform in the courts of justice; greater simplicity in all the operations of government; universal and rigid œconomy; advancement of philosophy; extension of civil liberty and patriotic feelings; encouragement of merit; all these things are attended to by Joseph, with a zeal and steadiness which will render Austria, in a short time, the astonishment of the world, and one of the most flourishing and mighty empires in it.

Perhaps you will ask, what is to become of the arts? Will there also be academies of inscriptions and belles lettres; Arcadian assemblies, academies of painting and statuary? Most certainly there will. One of the latter is an old institution; and as for the others, there are as many able subjects here as at Paris. Here are persons enough who have time and talents sufficient to make each other senseless compliments in periodical publications; to make parties to raise some insipid performance, the author of which has flattered their vanity into repute, and to oppress a writer of merit, who has ventured to dispute their judgment. Nor are there wanting persons who are capable of giving the most
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old fashioned thought an air of novelty, or publishing mutilated translations as their own works. It is, indeed, but eight or ten years since most of the new pieces which appeared on the French and English stages, were published here as original compositions. These things, therefore, will **exist**; but the Emperor will scarcely lay out a penny in this way; he knows better what to do with his money; and it had been well for us, had we applied the money which these institutions have cost us, to any other purpose, had it been only that of making canals to carry off the dirt which makes such a stink in the choaked up common sewers, and has already suffocated many.

Here, methinks, I see you look on me with contempt; for I know you live and move only for the belles lettres, and pity us barbarians, who do not sacrifice so ardently to the divine arts. Well do I remember all the kind things you used to say of my stupidity and coldness, or whatever else you pleased to call it, whenever I happened not to have the feeling you had, on meeting with a good epigram, a lively description, or a fine print or drawing. But, my dear brother, every man sees things in his own way, and, as in compliance with your leading passion, I have taken the trouble to give you a great deal
of

of intelligence about the German theatre and poetry, &c. &c. and promise you a great deal more from the northern parts of Germany, you will not take it amiss, if I say something to you in justification of my own taste, and peculiar way of thinking.

Tell me then, my dearest brother, if it be not a truth which all history attests, that in every nation, the æra of the arts and sciences has immediately preceded their fall? I will not be at the pains to prove this, by a long deduction of events, from the history of Greece to this time. You may recollect the excellent note of a Tyrolese monk, upon a passage in Columella, published by the author of *Voyages en differents Pays de l'Europe*. It contains the strongest evidence which history can give, that a country in which those arts which contribute chiefly to amusement, are held in high estimation, and are the most successful way of gaining honour and fortune, is a country verging fast to ruin. You will say, that the fault is not in the arts and sciences themselves. Right; but when they get a certain superiority in a nation, over the other employments of the mind, they must draw destructive consequences after them. Frivolity, weakness, profusion, neglect of more laborious pursuits and occupations, ostentation, wrong judgment

in choosing the servants of the state, a warm and immoderate desire of ornaments, &c. are necessary consequences of all these elegancies, when they are carried to that abuse which borders so near on the good use of them. And what do they contribute to the real happiness of men? Are they any thing more than a splendid dream? How short, too, has this æra been with all nations? After the generation of wits, generally there has succeeded a totally illiterate *borde*, who have wakened those the arts had put to sleep with blows, and laid them in chains before they had well rubbed their eyes. How long is it since the days of Corneille and Racine? And we are already exhausted! Poor nation!

Not that I altogether refuse my approbation to works of genius, or would leave them quite unrewarded. I only wish that an excessive liberality shall not confound merit and demerits, and encourage that contagious spread of *virtù* and *bel esprit*, which, if not guarded against, soon infects a whole nation, and destroys the balance that should ever subsist between the *useful* and agreeable. I am convinced the Emperor will not refuse to do justice to the poet, the painter, and every artist of real merit, nor leave them unrewarded. But the application of
philosophy

philosophy to the improvement of government; but those branches of mathematics and physics, which are connected with civil industry;—but those arts and sciences, in short, which contribute to the lasting happiness of the country, have still more to expect from him. And can you take this ill of him? His court will hardly resemble that of an Augustus, who could give a pension of 4000 louis d'ors to a poet, whilst he owed his old soldiers their pay. Certainly not. But Austria is advancing apace to the happy times of Henry IV. the times in which a nation begins to feel itself; when the foundation of national riches are laid; when civil liberty and peace are secured from the attacks of the monks and nobles; when the proper balance is established between all ranks of the state; when the fine arts and sciences, agreeable to their proper distinction, are only used for recreation, and more is not expended on them than a prudent œconomical father, who measures all his expences by the state of his fortune, would lay out on his pleasures; and when from this very reason, to wit, because they hold the rank they ought to hold, they thrive better than when excessive encouragement connects a train of votaries to them, who only love them for the sake of what they procure. When the

arts become the means of gaining a livelihood, there is an end of all great works; and when artists form a corporation, as with us, it is a corporation of apes and monkies. How rare are original geniuses! Would millions raise a Voltaire?

Pardon this digression, which was not so much a lash to your hobby horse, as an effusion of my esteem for the Emperor, whom I would wish to justify in your sight. I know that you cannot easily forgive his doing so little for the fine arts; but consider, brother, he lays out from ten to 20,000 louis d'ors, in supporting those who carry on useful employments, every one of whom, that wishes to establish a useful manufactory, may have any sum advanced at a small, or even without any interest at all. He assists all who will settle in the country in every way. He makes roads, builds villages, towns, and harbours, and has an army of at least 300,000 men to support. Ought he to be circumscribed in these expences, in order to establish an academy of *Inscriptions* and *Belles lettres*? Forbid it patriotism, forbid it humanity.

Perhaps, in time, he will do something for your goddesses, when all the court debts are paid, his finances in complete order, and the cloisters thinned. His debts are certainly not

so great as ours, and yet they amount to about 160 millions of florins, and he is obliged to pay eighteen millions a year, in interest and capital. The lands belonging to the cloisters and religious foundations, in the Imperial hereditary lands, are estimated at 300 millions of florins, of which nearly one half comes from the Netherlands and Lombardy. Possibly the muses may, in time, inherit some of this immense wealth.

L E T T E R XXXVII.

Vienna.

TO-MORROW I leave this place ; I shall stay some time at Prague, where I expect to hear from you.

It is now evident what the Emperor was about, during his mother's life-time. All the strangers who are here are astonished at the short time in which one of the greatest and most total revolutions has been effected ; a sure sign that it was thought of long before, and all the materials prepared. The nobility and clergy are every day more convinced that it will go harder and harder with them. But they make no resistance ; for both orders are entirely disarmed. Notwithstanding their great riches, the nobility are enfeebled by their effeminacy and dissipation, and the clergy have a snake in their own bosoms which will sting them to death. This snake is philosophy ; which, under the semblance of theology, has glided even to the episcopal chair. Most of the younger ecclesiastics are infected by the poison of this snake in the universities. They all know that there is a Febronius in the world, and some of them are only acquainted
with.

with him as a heretic ; yet as the arguments of the cowl have a much greater effect upon them than the arguments of their professors, and as the court is evidently friendly to him, they are not unwilling to be reconciled to their old enemy. The Bellarminists, who possess all the great benefices, still make, it is true, the greater number ; but if once they are in danger of losing their cures, or the 25,000 advocates in the Imperial dominions, who have long been ready with arguments, are ordered to charge, they will, no doubt, make very little resistance.

I do not believe there is a single man of understanding in the army, who does not most thoroughly approve the Emperor's new regulations. This part of the administration of the country has been in his hands a considerable time ; and it carries marks in every part of it, of having been so. Amongst all the Imperial officers I was acquainted with, I did not meet with one, of a certain age, who did not possess a certain fund of philosophy. During my stay here, I found them by far the best company in the place, and, with the permission of the Professors, Doctors, and other Literati, must think them by far the most enlightened people in the Austrian dominions. I will answer for finding many corporals in the Imperial army who have

more sense than nine out of ten of the literati. There has long been a freedom of thinking and reasoning in the army, which is a strong contrast to what obtains elsewhere, and does the Emperor the utmost honour. Every regiment has a library to itself, and the officers find means to procure every good book, however prohibited it may be. The King of Prussia has no longer Pope *be-salved* and *be-consecrated* generals, as he used to call Daun, to contend with. Even amongst the common soldiers, you may observe a kind of natural logic, which is the consequence of the way in which they are managed, and which you may trace in their tents, in their manœuvres, in their tables, and in every thing that belongs to them. There is not a vestige left of the bigotry which heretofore made the Imperial army so conspicuous. What, indeed, will the black troop undertake against a corps conducted as this is? The Emperor will not find the same facility in reforming the administration of civil and criminal justice, as he will meet with in reforming the church. There is still a formidable darkness over all this part of legislation. The defects, partly owing to the laws themselves, and the forms of administering justice, and partly increased through the stupidity, pedantry, dissoluteness, selfishness and want of patriotism

triotism of the servants of the court, have long been felt. The late Empress endeavoured to remedy them, but in vain; for were the *Codex Theresianus* ten times less barbarous than it is, still little would have been done. There is a want of men to give vigour to laws, however good.

During the time he was only a kind of viceroy, the Emperor took all the pains he was able, to throw more light upon the administration of justice, and to render it more impartial; nor do I believe there is a single instance of a striking and notorious act of injustice having been committed by any of his immediate servants; but he could not create new subjects, and as long as pride, laziness, and the love of shew, continue to be leading features in the characters of the principal members of the courts of justice, it is impossible but that fraud, chicanery, and, indeed, roguery of every kind, must find their way, in processes so complicated as these are.

Criminal justice is, indeed, in a most piteous condition. When you read the *Codex Theresianus*, you would conceive that it had been composed for a horde of *Baschis*. Here are punishments for crimes which have not been heard of in the country for a century; and penalties, very grievous indeed, but at the same time most ridiculous,

diculous, when you compare the state of the country and the state of the law, for offences which happen every day, but raise no clamour, such as fornication, adultery, and sodomy. This, however, is not so great an evil, for let laws be as severe as they will, still they expose civil and natural liberty to no danger, and the most inhuman laws that can be devised, are better than no law at all; or what amounts to the same thing, the non-observance of any. The latter unfortunately is the case here. It was soon seen that the *Codex Theresianus* agreed neither with the manners nor the character of the people, and the court became ashamed, at the time that all Europe was making an outcry about humanity, the abolition of capital punishments, &c. &c. of a statute-book which had nothing in it but halters, gibbets, swords, &c. What was to be done? They would not repeal the law; but contented themselves with an universal requisition to the judges to be mild, and not to inflict capital punishments without necessity. This misunderstood lenity is the greatest tyranny in the world. The most cruel law that can be devised cannot commit murder. On the contrary, the more cruel the law is, the more depravity and obstinacy it bespeaks to sin against it; but the general direction, to ‘have recourse to no capital punishments without necessity,’

'necessity,' tends to submit the guilty to the discretion of the judge, and thus undermines one of the principal props of civil liberty. As long as laws, let them be as severe as they will, are rigidly observed, the transgressor is without excuse. He knew the law, and not to guard against the penalty of it, bespoke wickedness and weakness; but in the last case he may be the victim of circumstances, with which his crime has not the least connection. I will relate a fact to you, which happened some years ago at Lintz, which, though it relates to military justice, will give you a very good idea of the state of criminal justice in this country.

Two grenadiers, who were among the handsomest men of the regiment, agreed to desert from Stein, and engaged others to desert with them. They were detected and condemned to die, as ringleaders, by the council of war. The whole regiment knew, that every general in the army had it in command, to suffer no sentence of death to be put in execution without the utmost necessity. As this necessity did not exist, General Brown was determined to grant a pardon, and he would have done so; but on a sudden the whole scene changed. The comrades of the prisoners went to them in prison, got drunk with them, and offered to go to the gallows in their stead; so persuaded were they
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that the pardon would come. The whole of this was related to the general. The day came; the young men went cheerfully to the field; all Lintz had no doubt but a pardon would meet them there, when lo, and behold! General Brown found out, that this was the reserved case of extreme necessity, and the men were executed. What was the consequence? The general had a reprimand from Vienna; but did he deserve it? Was it not a sufficiently good excuse for his conduct, to say, that desertions were grown every day more common, from the idea that sentences of death would never be carried into execution? In my opinion, these grenadiers were victims to the weakness of the legislation. Stability, not mercy, is the first merit of a law.

A general defect, which runs through the whole of this legislation, is, that it is loaded with orders which are not made effective. There is no end of projects and writings. There are orders upon orders, injunctions upon injunctions, and rescripts upon rescripts; the last of which, always overturns, or at least very much limits the preceding one. This is so constant a thing, that several persons in office in the country make it a rule, before they carry an order into execution, to wait five or six weeks to see whether it will not be contradicted. It would be a curious, and to the Austrian state a very profitable business,

business, if any person would take the trouble of collecting the contradictory laws which have been promulgated within these last eighteen or twenty years. This, no doubt, arose in part, because the Emperor and his mother had different plans of legislation; but now he governs alone, he will find it very difficult to bring matters right, as he cannot depend upon any assistance whatever from his subalterns.

The language of the courts of justice here is very singular. You must know, that they have a style of their own, which is totally different from the common style, and is called the chancellery, or law style.—I have just been reading a rescript of the Imperial court to the chapter of Saltzburgh, who are engaged in a law-suit with their archbishop. It contains periods which fill a whole folio side of paper, and in which, with all the attention in the world, it is impossible to find a connection. Indeed, the more unconnected it is, and the more abounding in the scarcest Latin and French words, the better this style is reckoned. There are likewise many German words, which are used in a sense directly opposite to what they have in common language. I look upon it as quite impossible that the grandchildren of the present generation should understand a single syllable of all their jargon. Fare ye well.

LETTER

L E T T E R XXXVIII.

Prague.

THE journey from Vienna to this place was one of the most pleasing I have ever taken, notwithstanding we did not meet with a single good town, during a journey of forty-four German post miles. My company consisted of an Imperial officer, a priest, and a traveller from Lower Saxony. The officer had served in the last war in Silesia. He was a sensible man, and acted as our *Cicerone* on two of the most noted fields of battle recorded in modern history.

As long as we continued in Austria, the country appeared singularly well cultivated, and there was all the appearance of a high state of happiness and ease among the farmers; but in the parts of Moravia we came through, the inhabitants did not seem near so happy as their neighbours. Notwithstanding this, however, the country is well cultivated throughout; nor do you see any of the wild deserts, which are so striking in Hungary. Snaym and Iglau are two very pretty villages. The inhabitants of these

these speak German very well; but you observe that it is not their native language.

The whole country is made up partly of a plain, and partly of gently rising hills; but on the confines of Bohemia, the hills rise into more stately, as well as more fruitful mountains. The parts of these through which our road lay, were covered with fine woods, villages, and several very stately castles, and there are mile-stones all the way. The roads are excellent. We met with few villages on the plains of Bohemia; it seems the Germans have a proverb, which says of a thing that is scarce, ‘that it is scarce as a village in Bohemia.’ As, however, it is evident from the list of those who draw for soldiers, that the country is extremely well peopled, and as we saw some very good agriculture, and no barren ground, we did not at first know what to make of these appearances; but our officer, who had travelled over the country far and near, explained them to us. He told us, that most of the villages lay off the great road, in the neighbourhood of rivers and brooks, or behind woods, and that if we would go a mile and a half, either to the right or left, we should see enough of them. This custom of hiding the habitations in the rocks of the country, or behind woods, probably took its rise in the

the time of wars, when the inhabitants endeavoured to procure shelter from the robbers and knight-errants who infested the land.—No doubt the convenience of having water contributed something to it. Between Kolin and Planiani, which are distant two German miles from each other, we came to the noted field of battle, which has taken its name from these two places, though it ought to have it from the small village near which the action really happened. Here we got out, and our *Cicerone*, who was proud of having had his share in the honour of that day, which did away the ignominy of Austria, went over the ground with us.

Many reasons have been given why this battle proved so fatal to the king of Prussia, and, as in all other cases of the kind, the historian will be puzzled to choose between the different relations of various sensible men, who were *all* eye-witnesses, and *all* took part in the labour and difficulty of the day.—Here, however, the event evidently depended upon the ground, which Daun knew how to make his advantage of.

Along the road, and to the right of it, there is a plain which extends as far as the eye can reach; on the left of this there is a gentle rise, which makes a kind of a peak near the village where the great action took place. On the right of this
 rising,

rising, which you can hardly call a hill, you discover streight before you a long, deep, ditch, encompassed with steep walls, which have the appearance, at a distance, of a plain betwixt woods. To the left this hill sinks in a remarkable hollow, and loses itself backwards in a great plain. Daun's right wing was placed on the top of the rising, and the remainder of his army was covered by the ditch on the left. The king of Prussia approached by the plain through which we were to pass. He was compelled to fight, or give up the siege of Prague, and evacuate Bohemia. The only part of the Imperial army he could attack was the right wing. The gallant Prussians were not at all disheartened by the inequality of the ground. Ever accustomed to conquer, their right wing advanced in silence up the hill. The Imperials, who had the advantage of the ground, beat them back again. Six times the Prussians returned to the attack; but as the ground was very narrow, they were at length much impeded by the numbers of their own dead, who lay on the slopes of the hill they had to ascend. Notwithstanding all this, they would still have gained the day, if Daun had not had time to flank his beaten right wing with cavalry. This immediately charged to the left of the hill in the flank

of the Prussians, who, after the sharpest contest, were at length obliged to give way. Whilst they were retreating in good order, prince Maurice, of Dessau, whose bravery often approached to rashness, took a single battalion, and with it encountered the whole force of the Austrian army. This made the rout much greater than it would otherwise have been. The prince would have fought his troops to the last man, if he had not been called off from his rash-headed attempt by the king's special command. As among other losses the king's guard had been entirely cut off, when the prince came up to him, he began crying out, "My guard, prince! my guard!" To which the other made answer, "My regiment, your majesty! my regiment!" He thought, that as his regiment had been cut off, there was nothing worth saving.

Now it may probably have been a fault in the king not to have had any cavalry in his left wing; but if it was so, it arose from the unevenness of the ground. If the Austrians had not had the great advantage of having their right wing on an eminence, and the rest of their army secure, in all probability the Prussians, who notwithstanding these disadvantages, made the victory dubious for a great while, would have got

got the day before Daun could have supported the attacked part with his cavalry, and in that case no person would have thought of a failure of cavalry on the Prussian part. The king, too, could not observe the motions of the German horse, whose sudden appearance from the hollow was the more formidable, from its being entirely unexpected, and what *a priori* must have seemed very improbable to the king.

Others say, that the king purposed to do nothing with his left wing, but intended to alter his mode of battle, and charge with his right, whilst the prince of Dessau was amusing the enemy.—In that case his flank would have been secured from the attack of the enemy's cavalry, and he would have had nothing to fear from the Austrian left wing on this side the deep ditch.—But, say those who maintain this opinion, the prince of Dessau, instead of amusing the enemy, made so lively and serious an attack, that the king was obliged to support him, out of apprehension, that if the prince was repulsed, the whole army might have been brought into disorder by the flight of his regiment. I take this likewise to be one of those after-thoughts which shew what a man should have done, but not what he did, or had a mind to do.—Others think, that the king trusting solely to his good fortune,

fortune, which had done such great things for him a little before at the battle of Prague, had neglected some necessary arrangements, particularly the bringing up his cavalry. But this seems one of the observations which a sensible writer makes after the time, to give himself the air of appearing to know more than other people. A man like the king of Prussia, who gives continual proofs that he does not suffer himself to be depressed by any reverse of fortune, is not likely to have been too much raised by his success.

Being now beaten, for the first time, after so many successful battles, Frederick retreated in the best order possible to Saxony, through *Leutmeritz* and *Aussig*. Depressed he was not, but a little out of humour at his oldest brother, since dead, who carried part of the army back into Saxony, by Gabel, experienced.—But, no doubt, you are well acquainted with this wonderful retreat, and the anecdotes concerning it, to be found in the book entitled, *Recueil de Lettres de sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse, regardant le dernière guerre.* If the king had gained this battle he would have been master of all Bohemia. All Austria would have stood open to him, and *Ollmutz* only would have prevented his going to Vienna. In this case he would have dictated to his enemies
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the conditions of peace, whereas the miscarriage was followed by six years of bloody war.

The king commanded this action from the window of an upper story of a public house, which stands alone, and is very near the road. It was with inexpressible pleasure that we dined in the room, which commands a view of the field of battle on both sides. Every thing here appeared sacred to me: as I stood in the place occupied by the king, in the window which directly fronts the eminence which occasioned his defeat, I felt all the mortification he must have experienced, when he found his troops giving way.—There were some marks of cannon-balls in the walls of this house, and the king was not altogether safe.

Kolin is a pretty little town, it is, without a doubt, the best place you meet with betwixt Prague and Vienna; the garrison, however, excepted, it does not contain above three thousand five hundred souls. The houses are not more than seven hundred, and do not seem to be very well inhabited. We rested a little here, and were extremely well treated; you live very cheap and well all over Bohemia. Small hares, ducks, geese, &c. are the common food met with, in the smallest inns.

In order to give you an idea of the price of provisions, I will give you an account of what the Saxon and I paid for a night's entertainment. You must know, that almost all the inns here have a bad appearance, and the innkeepers, notwithstanding the plenty they afford travellers, seem to be but in indifferent circumstances. Their houses generally stand alone in the street, and have neither orchard, kitchen-garden, or any piece of land near belonging to them. They are obliged to pay so heavy a rent to the landlord, or nobleman to whom the house belongs, that they can gain but very little. At last we saw an inn in a village we came to, which had a better appearance; it had a roomy court, good stables, a neat garden, and was the property of the landlady. Now, said we, as we got into our bed-chambers, we shall have another kind of a bill, and, no doubt, pay for the fine prospect which this room commands, the fine furniture, the exquisite glasses and china, and, in short, all the fine things which we enjoy or do not enjoy. We had for supper a rice soup, with an exceeding good chicken, a salad, and two young hares broiled. We had excellent beer, which is remarkably good in Bohemia, and a pot of wine, which we found very bad, and would not have another, as we knew that wine was
very

very dear all over Bohemia. We had two very clean beds, and some very good coffee for breakfast; and would you think it? when the bill was called for, it amounted only to forty-two creutzers, that is, about one livre and forty-two sols French.

We stopped about three miles from Prague, and went some furlongs out of the way to see the famous field of battle of the year 1757. Here the Prussians overcame nature itself. It was impossible for the Austrians to have more favourable ground. A deep, broad, perpendicular ditch protected them from the enemy. They had a very formidable artillery, which defended the ditch by batteries placed to great advantage. When the Prussians made their first attack by the ditch, they fell like flocks of snow: the Austrian fire was terrible. There has not been a harder or bloodier action in the present century, nor is there perhaps in history, a single instance of a *battle* won under such circumstances as the Prussians had to contend with. It is almost literally true, that they had at the the same time a fort to take and an army to beat, which was stronger than their own. Conceive to yourself, a deep ditch flanked with cannon, on the other side of which is encamped a

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bold

bold looking army of at least seventy thousand men. The Prussians marched through the ditch, and through the fortifications opposed to them, put the enemy to the most complete flight, and besieged Prague, in which part of the flying Imperial army took refuge. But they paid dear for the victory; their loss of men was infinitely greater than that of the enemy; accounts differ with regard to the numbers slain; some make them seven, others from nine to ten thousand men. This is the case with all modern actions. The truth, however, without the least exaggeration is, that the immense ditch was filled throughout its whole breadth with dead men, who in many places likewise, lay in great heaps upon each other.

The stroke which the king felt most of all, was the loss of the brave general Schwerin. We looked with the most solemn melancholy on the tree near which he fell. The present Emperor has erected a monument to him, which does no less honour to the person who set it up, than to him whose name it bears and eternizes. Many anecdotes are current with regard to the death of this brave man. It has been said, that a rough answer given by the king to a message he sent him by an adjutant
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in the midst of the battle, to let him know it was impossible to win it, occasioned him to seek death; but I do not believe this; for even supposing Schwerin to have remonstrated on what he thought an impossibility, the king knew well enough that the word *obey* was sufficient to remind him of his duty, and to make him do all that could be expected from a man of his character, for courage and abilities; no, we must do Schwerin the justice to say, that he died because, according to the proverb, every man owes a death. He died like a patriot; he saw the violence of the contest, saw the good will of his soldiers, and their courage, which the havock death made all around them could not tame. Nothing, he found, but an act of desperation on his part could save them, he therefore snatched the colours out of the hands of a dying cornet, crying, follow me, my brave boys, and rode up to the mouth of the cannon. A ball took him off, at the head of his brave troops, but they, fired by his courage and example, got up the hill, broke in on the enemy, and by that deed turned the day in favour of the king. After the battle the king besieged Prague. Daun in the mean time collected the broken Imperial troops, got an army together, and hastened

hastened to the relief of the town, the garrison of which was making a brave resistance; this army the king was compelled to attack, or raise the siege; this brought on the above described battle of Kolin, in which he lost all that he had won before.

LETTER XXXIX.

Prague.

BOHEMIA is a country favoured of heaven, the climate is excellent. In this excursion I have become acquainted with several foreigners who make their constant residence here, and are induced to it by the wholesomeness of the air, the goodness and cheapness of all the necessaries of life, and the cheerful good-humour of the inhabitants,—and yet Æneas Silvius describes the country as a part of Siberia, though it was, in all probability, more flourishing in his time than it is now; to be sure, the difference of the climate must have been striking to a Roman, but I believe his eminence was here only in the winter; the spring is not so beautiful even at Rome, as it is here; spring and summer are as remarkable as the winter is at Vienna, where you seldom see a regular spring, but the winter and summer almost join. The climate of this country is not exposed to any of those sudden and inclement changes which are so fatal to health in other places. The winter colds are neither too

sharp,

sharp, nor the summer heats too strong. The air is dry, clear, and temperate. The country lies high, and forms a large extended plain, surrounded on all sides by very high hills covered with rich woods. The vale in the middle, which is watered by the Elbe, the Moldaw, and the Eyer, of which you may easily form an idea, by casting your eyes on the map, is protected from the force of the wind. The several hollows in the middle contribute to let out the waters, so that there are neither lakes nor morasses to fill the air with unwholesome vapours. As the soil is stony only in very few places, the waters flow easily through the country, and make it fruitful, without filling the air, as is the case in several parts of Upper Switzerland, with catarrhs and coughs.

The country produces every thing that can contribute to the comfort of life in astonishing abundance, wine and salt only excepted. The greatest part of the former is brought at a very moderate price from Lintz, where is a warehouse for salt, which is brought from Gerund in Austria, and Halle in the Tyrol. The remainder is brought from Austrian Poland at a moderate price. There have been many successful experiments made to produce wine, and I have tasted some melnikers, very little inferior

to the second sort of Bourdeaux wines. The first stocks were brought from Burgundy. The country, however, will hardly be able to produce a sufficiency of this article for consumption, but it has other advantages to make up for the loss. As it possesses most of the prime necessities of life, and by that means commands a superiority of trade, which none of the neighbouring countries can dispute with it, it provides a great part of Silesia, Saxony, and Austria with corn, and also sells them some cattle. The circle of *Saasser* is alone able to furnish all Bohemia, populous as the country is, with corn, even in moderate years. The excellent Bohemian hops are carried as far as the Rhine in great quantities. The breed of horses is likewise wonderfully improved within these few years, and bring annually large sums of money into the country. The Bohemian tin is the best of any, next to the English; and they carry on a very considerable trade in alum, and several kinds of precious stones, particularly garnets. The large woods, in which the country abounds, furnish materials for the wonderful manufactories of glass, which bring a great deal of money into the country, and find their way into every part of Europe from Portugal to Sweden. Within these few years they have also made
large

large quantities of very good, and uncommonly cheap hats, with which they supply great part of the inhabitants of Austria, Bavaria, and Franconia. The handkerchief and linen manufactories are also in good repute.

The Bohemians travel much. Some as dealers in glass, who go as far as England and Italy, and some as basket and sieve makers. I have met with large caravans of these on the Upper Rhine, and in the Netherlands. These people commonly come home with pretty large sums of money; they keep together like brothers, whilst they are in foreign countries. They have indeed an uncommon share of patriotism, and a kind of confidence in each other, which often makes them pass in the eyes of strangers for a savage and barbarous people, though they really are not so.

Since the days of Hufs they have a secret hatred to the Germans, which does not arise so much from bad temper as from a kind of national pride. Most of the farmers who live near the roads, speak German; but as they do not like to talk to a stranger without necessity, they pretend not to understand a word of what the traveller says, and make their sport of him amongst themselves. It has been attempted to make them send their children to
German

German schools, but hitherto they have all proved abortive. They have an unspeakable aversion to whatever is German. I have heard young men here talk of the battles which their ancestors, under Ziska, fought against the Germans, with a degree of warmth and pride, which made them very amiable in my eyes. They still remember too, that the residence of the court at Prague formerly rendered the country flourishing, and lament that the preference which has been given to Austria, in consequence of a slight misunderstanding, carries off large sums annually from the country, which are sent to Vienna, partly by the court, and partly by the nobility. The late Empress was extremely offended with them on account of this misunderstanding, and Bohemia was the only one of her old hereditary dominions which she never visited.

The Hussites are still very numerous in the country. Some think that a fourth part of the inhabitants are of this sect, which has also spread widely in Moravia. Scarce four years are past since above 10,000 farmers made a little stand to recover their freedom of opinion; but they were soon quieted, and the thing had no further consequences.

Voltaire,

Voltaire, and some other historians, have much misrepresented the famous Huss and his doctrines. They look upon this reformer as a man of a very limited understanding, and think that his object went no further than to procure the clergy leave to marry, and let the people have the use of the cup, at the sacrament. They love to make sport with him, and say, that he endeavoured to make the incomprehensible mystery still more incomprehensible, without having the least attention to how much the human mind was lowered by such mysteries. They deny him the philosophical spirit, both of his predecessor Wickliff, or of his followers, Luther, Zwingli, and Calvin. I had formerly the same opinion of him myself; but since I have studied his history, and the histories of his followers, I have conceived a much higher idea of him. I searched in the library of Vienna for all the documents that relate to this interesting history. In Menker, I found a vindication of the opinions of the Hussites, addressed to the diet of Nuremberg. It is written in a German which I could not understand, till I had read it over six or seven times, and procured assistance from several of my friends. This wonderful representation contains the whole confession of faith of the Hussites,

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They attack the whole system of the Roman Catholic church, purgatory, fasts, monkery,—and it is certain that they were only one step behind Calvin. The style of this vindication has all the marks of intimate persuasion, and of the soundest understanding, only like Luther, the author sometimes falls into the style of the times, and runs into low language.

In fact, the sole advantage which the other reformers had over Hufs, arose from the invention of printing since his time, as in consequence of this, knowledge was much more widely spread, as the doctrines could be much more widely diffused. The doctrines of Hufs were lost amidst the wars which followed his death. They were stifled in the barbarity which overspread Bohemia, when the people no longer attended to any teacher, but the sword became the sole decider of all controversy.

I found sufficient proofs, that Hufs, notwithstanding his obstinacy and presumption, possessed an enlightened and philosophical mind, which, however, partook somewhat of the unpolished character of the age in which he lived. I am sometimes tempted to write his history, which perhaps is not yet sufficiently understood. Whether I shall persevere I know not, but in the mean time will collect what mate-

rials I can, and when I have time, try, whether I have any talents for writing history,—at least I feel a great temptation to do this.

The present race of Hussites, flatter themselves, that the Emperor, whose sentiments of toleration are well known, and who is very fond of the Bohemians, will restore to them their freedom of opinion; but people here generally think, that they are deceived in their expectations; for as their sentiments nearly approach those of the Lutherans, it would not be very prudent to allow the establishment of a new sect, which always spreads some roots that may grow, and be dangerous.

The Bohemians are a wonderfully strong-built race of men. Dubravius, one of their historians, who was Bishop of Olmutz, in the sixteenth century, compares them to lions. ‘As the land (says he, according to the manner of writing of those times,) lies under the influence of Leo, so do its inhabitants possess all the qualities of that noble animal. Their high chests, sparkling eyes, strong thick hair, stout bones, strength, courage, and irresistible spirit, when opposed, all shew evidently that the lion is their star, which they bear likewise in their coat of arms.’

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They are a handsome, strong-built, and active race of people; and you see evidently that they are descended from the Croats, who are some of the handsomest people upon earth. Their heads are a little too large; but their broad shoulders, and their thick-set bodies, render the disproportion not so visible as it would otherwise be. They are without doubt the best foldiers of all the Emperor's troops. They bear the inconveniencies of the military life longer than any. Even hunger, that deadly fiend to every thing that calls itself an Imperial soldier, they can support for a considerable time.

My journey through the hereditary dominions of the House of Austria, confirmed an opinion I had long since taken up in other countries, which is, that the inhabitants of the mountains are by no means as good foldiers as those who inhabit the plains. The Tyrolese, Carinthians, Ukranians, and Styrians, have as strong bodies as the Bohemians, but they are by no means as good foldiers as these, and without a doubt are the most wretched of all the Emperor's troops. Even in Switzerland, as I have heard from some of the most intelligent officers of the country, the Zurichers, and that part of the inhabitants of Berne, who live in

the lower parts of the Canton, are infinitely better soldiers than the *Graubundtners*, and other nations who inhabit the top of the Alps. The true reason of this is no doubt to be sought for in the peculiar way of living of a mountainous people, which is too particular for them ever to be able to change their way of life, without suffering by it.

All people likewise who live by pasturage, are known to be much weaker than those who live by agriculture, who are hardened by the weather, and continual labour. The inhabitants of mountains, who according to the testimony of history, are mostly herdsman, defend their country with more perseverance, than the inhabitants of plains, because the property they have in it, makes them fonder of it, and because the defence of their almost inaccessible possessions, is naturally much easier to them; but they are by no means as formidable out of their own country, and they soon get the *maladie du Pais*, which you know is so common amongst the Swifs.

The constitution and manners of the country contribute much to make the Bohemians such soldiers as they are. The farmers live in a poverty, which preserves them from effeminacy and luxury much more effectually than
any

any positive sumptuary law could do. Besides this, the feudal slavery system, which obtains here in the extreme, accustoms them, from their youth upwards, to unconditional obedience, the great military virtue of our days. Their constant labour and scanty food, renders them hardy, and, like the Spartans, they find the soldier's life far easier than ploughing the fields of their masters.

It is inconceivable how a people in such a wretched situation should possess so many virtues as these do. They have given irrefragable proofs of their love of liberty, and in no city of the Austrian hereditary dominions have I met with so many true patriots as there are here. The Bohemian peasant is generally looked upon as stupid and insensible, but take them all together, they have a great deal of feeling and natural understanding. I have conversed with several of them, who lamented the horrors of their situation to me in terms sufficiently expressive, and spoke of the cruelty of their tyrants as it deserved to be spoken of. They love the Emperor with a degree of enthusiasm, and are confident that he will break their chains. In the Hussite war they gave proofs of courage, which would obscure all the famed deeds of the Helvetic one, if they were but half as well described.

scribed or sung as these have been: without any advantages of situation, and on even ground, they have with a handful of men defeated bands far better armed, and far better disciplined than themselves. Their onset was irresistible, and they would have inevitably secured that freedom to themselves, for which they fought so well, if towards the end of the war, dissensions, mostly fostered by the spirit of party and priestcraft that had arisen amongst themselves, had not ruined them, and if they had not been betrayed by treaties with their enemies.

I could not without the greatest commiseration look upon the handsome young farmers, who barefooted, with torn linen, and stockings uncommonly tattered, and yet clean clothes, without neckcloths, often without hats, were carrying corn or wood for their masters to market. Their good appearance and cheerfulness seemed to me but ill-suited to their hard fortune. One of them, who carried my great-coat (which I had brought out with me for fear of rain, but could not wear on account of the heat) in his waggon during a three days journey I took on foot, to the pretty village of Brandeis, was the drollest and best young man in the world. He had nothing on but breeches and stockings, but shewed us with a kind of vanity, a sort of linen frock

frock which was in the waggon, and which had almost as many holes as threads in it. His shirt was almost in pieces, and yet he assured me, in his broken German, that he cared neither for wind nor weather: this led me into several philosophical reflections upon the luxury of my useless great coat. My young man was all life and spirits, and his good-looking legs, and sunburned face, had almost reconciled me to the slavery I had been so angry with. I thought I to myself, luxury is generally complained of, and temperance and hardiness recommended to the farmer; but is it possible to preserve them from effeminacy and luxury, if you once open the door of riches to them. On the other hand, the master is obliged to furnish his slave with necessaries, if he does not choose to ruin himself; and though the latter has no property, he is sure of never being exposed to beg his bread. No fire, no weather, no war can put him in a different situation at the end of the year, from what he was when he began it. In this manner I was going on; but the thoughts that their hardiness and frugality is no consequence of their own good will, and that they are no more in their masters estimation than the cattle which plough the fields, broke off at once the contract I was making with slavery.—In the mean

time my fellow-traveller accompanied my reflections with dancing and singing, and in the intervals talked to his two fine horses, whose wonderfully sleek skins were a strong contrast to his own miserable clothing. He seemed to have a great love for the horses, stroked and patted them; and yet they were not his, but belonged to a prelate, whose slave he was. For my part, brother, I have no good idea of a prelate, who covers his horses backs with fine trappings, and suffers his slaves to go naked. But, is a man to expect *consistency* in a *prelate*?—My good young peasant gave me a proof of strength which astonished me. Not far from the village where I intended to pass the night, his spirited horses attempted to run away, but the waggon fell into a ditch, lost a wheel, and the horses were forced to stand still. The young man lightened the hinder axletree, where the wheel had failed, and thought the horses would do the rest, but the ditch was too deep; I would have assisted him, but he protested highly against it, and setting himself with all his force to the waggon, in a moment it was right again, without the horses having done any thing.—He refused the small present I would have made him, and, as we went along, laughed at me whenever I talked of his miserable circumstances,

cumstances, and seemed to think it strange I should imagine that he wanted any thing: possibly his master makes up to him in good eating and drinking, what he suffers him to want in clothes.

I saw every where amongst the peasants excellent horses. The Emperor, and all the German nobility, have furnished their studs with Moldavian, Tartarian, and Transylvanian stone-horses, which have much improved the breed. For a guilder any man may get his mare covered in the Imperial or nobles studs.

* Bohemia furnishes a great part of the horses for the dragoons, and the race becomes every day better and more numerous.

L E T T E R XL.

Prague.

THIS is a very large town, it is above three miles long, and above two broad, but the population by no means answers to the size of the place. In several parts you seem as if you were in a village. Near the bridge, which stands at the upper part of the city, the number of people is very great, but the further you go from hence the more desolate you find every place. The number of inhabitants is about seventy thousand, and there is about five thousand houses.—The bridge over the Moldau is seven hundred feet long; it is built of large freestone, and ornamented on both sides with stone statues as large as life, but not more than three of these are worth seeing. There are very few good buildings in this place, and almost every thing looks very dirty. The royal castle is a very large irregular building, but it is built on a hill, which commands a very fine prospect over the whole city and country round. Not far from hence stands the archbishop's house (a pretty modern building), and the old cathedral, in which there are some pieces

of architecture, which deserve to be seen; they are the work of a celebrated German, or Bohemian artist, whose name I have forgotten.

Though the city is in general ill built, the situation of it is extremely fine. There is a better prospect from the bridge than I have seen in larger cities. The mass of houses rise like an amphitheatre to a considerable height. To the right the hill rises above them as far as the imperial palace, majestically situated on the top. To the left it is covered as far as the middle with beautiful gardens and pleasure houses, which have a fine effect, and form a most extensive and most magnificent amphitheatre.

From these gardens you command a very fine prospect over the opposite part of the city. In the midst of the broad, but dry Moldau, there are two small islands, called Great and Little Venice, in which the inhabitants make parties of pleasure.

The people of this place enjoy sensual pleasures more than those of Vienna, because they know better how to connect mental enjoyments with them. The society I have lived in here, has proved so good as to detain me a full fortnight longer than I intended. Freemasonry flourishes extremely here, and some persons,
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amongst whom Count R—— is one, doat on it to enthusiasm. The freemasons in general do so much good, particularly by their establishments for education, that it is impossible the Emperor should be displeased with them. It is time to have done with illiberal prejudices against an institution which has done no harm to mankind, and has done it a great deal of good.

The Bohemians, who addict themselves to the pursuit of the arts and sciences, generally speaking, are very successful in them. They do not want genius, and have uncommon industry. Their fondness for music is astonishing. I have heard several orchestras here which equalled those of Paris in brilliancy of execution, and surpassed them in accuracy and exactness of harmony. Bohemian players on the horn and harp are to be met with throughout all Germany. As they always bring home great sums of money, you seldom see a musician of this kind, who has not travelled. This passion for music is generally attributed to the number of monasteries and cathedrals; but the cathedrals of Austria and Bavaria, which are no less numerous, have no such effect upon the public taste of those countries. I should therefore suppose, that the true reason is to be sought for in the customs and natural genius of the people. Most of the students of the
place

place are musicians, and begin very early in life to give serenades and concerts in the squares and public places of the city.

The numerous garrison, which is constantly kept here, contributes not a little to the liveliness of this place; there are about nine thousand men constantly quartered here. The six regiments of grenadiers are the finest body of infantry I have ever seen. The officers are excellent companions, and quite free from those prejudices, from which other bodies of men are not yet totally exempt.

• The Jews make a considerable part of the inhabitants of this place; there are at least nine or ten thousand of them; they have artists and mechanics of their own religion, who live in the part of the town appropriated to them, which is called the Jews city. It is pleasant enough to walk through this part of the town, and see their tailors and shoemakers at work in the middle of the street. Their workmen are distinguished from the Christian ones by their clownishness and dirt. I am astonished as often as I think, how little of what was peculiar to themselves in their customs, these people have lost by their mixture with other nations: wherever I have seen them, excepting only in Holland, they are infinitely behind the
Christians

Christians in every elegant refinement of life; and that they are otherwise in Holland, may be owing to most of those who are settled there having come chiefly from Portugal, where the persecutions they are exposed to compel them to assimilate as much to Christians as possible. At Prague they are distinguished from the Christians by a yellow handkerchief, which they are obliged to wear round their arms. Their industry is wonderful; in almost every inn there is a Jew, who does the business of a house-servant; he fills my snuff-box, garters my stockings, does all the little matters I have occasion for; brushes my shoes, dusts my clothes, and is in every respect a *valet de place*, excepting that he will take no money. He looks upon himself as extremely well paid for his trouble, by the gift of some old clothes, which he disposes of again. These fellows serve many strangers on the same terms, and content themselves with what they can make by trucking and bartering among their own people, without asking any thing farther. If you give them something to drink besides they are very thankful, but I have never seen them troublesome with their demands.

What political inconsistency!—The government of this place allows the Jews, the professed enemies

enemies of Christianity, freedom of thought, and liberty to serve God in their own way, and refuses it to the Protestants, who think as we do in all the fundamental points of religion; whilst a hostile, deceitful, treacherous people, are maintained in the full possession of their rights and privileges; contracts have been repeatedly (I do not speak only of what happened in former times, but under the last government) violated with the Hussites.—It is a remarkable phenomenon, dear brother, in the history of the human understanding, that while philosophers all contend, that the more alike men are, the more they love each other, in religion it should be quite different. Here the more likeness the more hatred. A member of one of the great houses of this place, would ten times rather treat with a Jew than with a Lutheran, though the Lutheran's religion and his own are so nearly alike. In Holland the reformed are much more favourable to the Catholics than to the Lutherans, and the States General had much rather allow the former freedom of religion than the latter. The Anabaptists and Calvinists hate each other much more than either of them do the Catholics, and so, in short, you will find it universally, the nearer the religious sects approach, the more they hate one another.

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This city has neither an extensive commerce nor any manufactory of consequence. There has long been a project of rendering the Moldau navigable, but hitherto this court has not been disposed to be at any expence for the public, and the thing cannot be done without a great expence. With us it would have been done long ago, as you know we have improvements, in comparifon of which, this is only child's play. Were it once done, Prague would certainly gain a good deal by it; but ftill a great deal more would be required, before commerce could flourish here; there are, indeed, many impediments to get over; amongft the principal one may be reckoned the pride of the nobility, who with the greateft part of the national means in their hands are afhamed of trade;—the bad education of the children, which, within thefe ten or fifteen years, has been entirely monkifh, and by that means fitted them more for ftrenuous idlenefs than induftry;—the intolerance of the regency.—Such obftacles as thefe all Jofeph's efforts will hardly be fufficient entirely to remove. There is a foundation of Englifh, or rather, for fo they are called, of Irifh nuns here. Throughout all Germany you meet with Englifh, Scotch, and German nuns. It is generally imagined, that moft of thefe feminaries have
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been founded since the reformation took place in England. But this is a mistake, and most of them have probably subsisted ever since the time of Charlemagne, when Britain abounded in monks, and furnished Germany with them. An English and Scotch nunnery sounds as well in Germany as an English and Scotch freemasons lodge.

This place abounds, like Vienna, in literati, who are content to ornament their rooms with the busts, medals, prints, and profiles of learned men, but neither think nor write themselves; and only have their titles from their belonging to no other association of men whatever: for it is here as at Vienna, whoever has neither military nor civil employment, nor is professor, nor priest, nor merchant, nor handicraftsman, nor manufacturer, nor servant, nor day-labourer, nor (what in the catalogue passes for a man) executioner, is a man of letters, whether he studies or not. In the general acceptance, a man of letters is only a *negative* quality. I am indeed acquainted with a few *positive* literati here, but their number in comparison of the *negatives* is very inconsiderable. The women of this place are handsome, and you may make love with more ease than at Vienna.

By way of postscript to this letter, which must still wait ten days before it is finished, I will give you a short account of an expedition we took : We went post as far as *Konigingrads*; there we took horse, and made a six days tour round by *Jaromers*, *Neustadt*, *Nachod*, *Braunau*, &c. to the borders of Silesia, with the double purpose of seeing the encampments and fields of battle of the war that took place two years ago, and of visiting some rich abbots houses, in which my companions had friends. We had an officer with us who commanded in both expeditions, and succeeded very well. The marches and encampments did not interest me much, because little was done in the war ; but I was extremely pleased with our excursions into the cloysters.

My principal object was to see the manners and way of life of Bohemian ecclesiastics upon the spot, and I was richly rewarded. They are the most determined epicureans, particularly the regular bodies of them, which I have yet met with any where. They want nothing in the convents, for the accomplishment of all earthly gratifications, but a cloyster of nuns, made up of the maidens who do business at Prague by night; *sub Jove pluvis, intriviis et quadriiviis*. Whatever bad effect it might have in some respect,
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the farmers and manufacturers who live in the neighbourhood of the cloysters, and consider their wives as their property, would undoubtedly be pleased with the arrangement. As things now are, the monks and half monks, to whom the villages round belong, appear like so many hunters of women; nor do I believe them very different from those old lords of manors, who used to claim the first night's possession of every woman married to one of their vassals; it is at least certain, that in every village we went through, we found one or two of them, who took no pains to conceal their belonging to the fraternity of jolly boys; to know them thoroughly one ought to be acquainted with their superiors, who would, no doubt, furnish good anecdotes for the scandalous chronicle:—in some convents we met with singing women.

The lives of the regular bodies, and even of the Benedictines, whose abbot, or prelates, has not yet given up the pleasures of the world, is a perpetual carousal, which is only interrupted by country walks, and certain stated belchings in church. They look upon chaunting the service as a kind of expectoration good for the lungs. One of them, for whom I expressed some concern, on seeing him eat immense quantities of eggs, butter, &c. on a fasting day, said in a jest-

ing way; ‘pshaw, pshaw, it will all come up again at afternoon service.’

My companions being desirous to shew me a very wonderful natural curiosity, we took our way by *Trautenau* for this purpose. About three miles from this city the finest prospect offered itself to our eyes that can be conceived.

Near a village, whose name I have forgotten, we beheld on a sudden, a great number of high towers, several of which in many places were in regular rows, but most of them lay dispersed in an extraordinary manner. We walked near a mile as if in a kind of labyrinth, encompassed with these towers on each side, and there was no end of my astonishment. Most of these are from sixty to seventy feet high, and some from one hundred to one hundred and fifty. When you view them obliquely their summits form a kind of waving line, like the back of a hill, which rises and sinks again. They are all formed of a hard quarry stone, and would give Mr. Buffon much food for thought. Nature has for the most part shaped them into more or less regular squares; they are commonly taken for the skeletons of a hill, through which the water has made its way. This opinion seems to merit attention; but if it be a true one, and other hills have also their skeletons, it will shake hard

hard upon Buffon's system; for he probably considers the masses, of which these towers consist, as large masses of stone body, chalk and earth, which are jumbled together and have different degrees of hardness.

From hence we took our way back to Freiheit, and began to ascend the *Riesengeberge*; this hill, though very famous in Bohemia, is really no more than a mole-hill, in comparison of the Savoyard and Swiss Alps, or even of the Tyrol, Salzburg, and Stirian hills. We passed over the famous *Snowhead*, which is the highest part of these mountains. Some persons say, that it is twenty thousand feet high; but I think I may venture to assert, that it is not above eight thousand, for Mount St. Gothard in Switzerland, is by no means one of the highest of the Alps, and its elevation above the Mediterranean is not above thirteen thousand feet, and yet there is eternal ice and snow on its summit; whereas here we saw no vestige of ice or snow, though the summer is not yet much advanced. We were not above three hours in getting to the top on foot. The prospect of the great mountains at our feet, and into Bohemia, and Silesia, was striking and magnificent. On the top of the hill there is a plain with a chapel on it, which is visited by pious people once a year.

The persons who live at any distance from these hills, look upon it as a kind of wonder when any person goes to the top of them, and yet I ascended several in other parts of Germany, whose distance from the bottom is much greater, and whose elevation above the Mediterranean is as great again.

Though I was disappointed in my expectations of a great mountain, by finding only a hill of a moderate size, I was extremely pleased with my journey upon the whole. We saw the most romantic landscapes it is possible to imagine, particularly several vallies below the *Schmeekopp*, which were wonderfully picturesque. Most of the hills are covered with wood, and now and then a ragged peak starts up above them. The well watered plains are extremely well cultivated; and, upon the whole, the inhabitants seem to be in better circumstances than those of the level plains of Bohemia.

LETTER XLI.

Dresden;

Dear Brother,

I HAVE at once got into an entirely new world. As soon as you have passed the confines of Bohemia, which are distinguished by a painted brick post ten feet high, with the arms of the country on it; you meet with an entirely different agriculture, a different people, and a different language. I now, for the first time, heard the common people speak intelligible German, for throughout Bavaria, Suabia, and Austria, they speak a jargon, which a man, who has learned the language of a language-master, has the utmost difficulty to understand. I am now, for the first time, really in Germany; only a very small part of the country I have hitherto travelled through, to wit, the small strip of land which is betwixt the Danube and the Rhine in Suabia, made part of that old Germany, the inhabitants of which were so formidable to the Romans; the remainder is all conquered country, which at that time was called Vindelicia, Rhaetia, and Pannonia. In the times of Pepin

and Charlemagne the limits of Germany were confined even on this side; for as the Slavonians had before driven the Burgundians, Suabians, and other German nations over the Elbe, these now possessed themselves of their habitations, and drove the inhabitants of Germany, who lived in the districts of Mentz and Rheims, into Gaul. The nations were like a row of balls, the most eastern of which was struck and drove the others forward in succession. In modern times, that is, ever since Luther, Saxony has been looked on as one of the first provinces of Germany, in every sense of the word. In regard to literature particularly, the Saxons were to the rest of the Germans, what the Florentines were some centuries ago to the other people of ——. But I am going too fast, you shall know all this in due time; I must first tell you how I got here, and what was the face of the country through which I came.

The part of Bohemia, through which our way from Prague hither lay, seems infinitely richer and more beautiful than that betwixt Prague and Austria. The agriculture, like the country itself, is more varied, the people live closer together and seem to be happier. Hills, woods, plains, and vales, form an agreeable contrast with each other; and the vine, which is

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not to be seen elsewhere on this side Prague, here covers the sides of the hills.

We saw the well wooded peak of the *Ertzgi-berge*, the highest summit of which parts Saxony and Bohemia. These hills are but of a very moderate height, and if they make a respectable appearance here, it is only because, from hence to the mouth of the Elbe and the eastern sea, there is no other remarkable hill to be seen. The people who come up here from the low lands, and for the first time of their lives see a hill which deserves the name, make a great shout, and think that they have seen the pedestal of heaven; just so in Bohemia, the *Riesengeberge* is indebted for its reputation to the small notion which those who have brought it into repute have of hills; and thus it may formerly have been with Atlas, Olympus, Athos, Parnassus, and the other hills so noted in history.

Moore, who travelled this road before me, asserts that there is a great difference in point of natural fertility, betwixt the borders of Saxony and the borders of Bohemia, to the advantage of the former; I have found the direct contrary. It is certain, that the soil of Bohemia is by nature much richer than any part of Saxony, which it supplies with great part of its provisions.

provisions. The circle of Leutmerisser in particular, through which the common road passes, is uncommonly productive, nor is there any part of Saxony that can bear a comparison with it; but then, on the other hand, the improved state of agriculture is visible, as soon as you set your feet on Saxon ground. One need only look round to be convinced that the constitution of Saxony is infinitely more favourable to industry and agriculture than that of Bohemia. The Saxon farmer shews more understanding and reflection in the management of his land than the Bohemian one does, and every thing about him attests that he is no slave.

Dresden has a proud appearance, and offers on all sides a magnificent object; it is beyond all comparison the finest city which I have yet seen in Germany. The houses are built in a much better taste than those of Vienna, and the eye is quite dazzled with the long and magnificent appearance of the bridge over the Elbe. This river, which at some distance from the city is confined within very narrow bounds, widens by degrees as you approach, and is here a powerful stream, which bespeaks all the magnificence of the town and state. The hills opposite to the *Lawns* have a most magnificent appearance, and the mountains on both sides
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the river, partly naked and partly planted with vineyards, form an uncommonly beautiful perspective.

The manners and way of living of these people is as opposite to what I have hitherto seen in Germany, as the beauty of these streets, and the taste displayed in the buildings, is different from Suabia, Bavaria, Austria, and Bohemia. Finer shapes, more animated countenances, easier and less constrained motions, general courtesy, universal cleanliness, are the features which immediately offer themselves to observation, and must strike every one who comes into this country by the same route which I pursued.

It was in an unfortunate moment that the fortifications about this town were first begun, but it is more unfortunate still, that instead of pulling them entirely down, those who are concerned are at this instant employed in repairing them. Commanded as this city is, from every side, and with no reasonable expectations, in its present situation, of ever being able to preserve a neutrality on the breaking out of any war betwixt the king of Prussia and the Austrians, it is more than any other in danger of being plundered and laid waste. Indeed one would have imagined that the devastations of the years 1758 and 1760, were

were still fresh enough in every man's memory to have been a warning to the regency.

The town does not seem to be peopled in proportion to the quantity of ground it stands on. The number of inhabitants is generally estimated at fifty thousand, which many think too high. The fact is, that it has lost a third of its inhabitants since the breaking out of the last Silesian war, and the death of king Augustus.

The strangers who knew this city before this æra, cannot say enough of the difference there now is, a difference not so much arising from the misfortunes of war, as from the œconomy of the court, which has followed close on the dissipation of other times. In the late elector's time, this court was perhaps the most brilliant in Europe. The court band of music, the opera, and the dancers alone, were supposed to cost the Elector annually 300,000 Saxon guilders, or upwards of 780,000 French livres. His table, his stables, and his hunters, were all in the same style of expence. Strangers used to flow hither from all countries, to be partakers in this magnificence, and Dresden was the rendezvous of the north for taste and refined living. The numerous followers of the court, and the great number of strangers, occasioned a very
extensive

extensive circulation of money, and made all the arts alive. In the midst of this profusion debts were contracted, but they gave the Elector little concern, as is evident from the following anecdote. One night at the opera, having a fire-work, which was part of the decoration of a temple, and used to cost several hundred thalers, he called for his chamberlain, and desired to know the reason of the omission; the chamberlain told him, that the heathen gods and goddesses must for this night be contented with a fire of twenty or thirty guilders, as there was no money left in the treasury to pay for any thing more splendid. The Elector was compelled to acquiesce for the moment, as it was too late for him to do otherwise, but he gave strict orders, that in the next representation, and in every succeeding one, the whole sum of thalers should be burnt out. A court which is mounted on this *ton* is seldom possessed of a firm and sound government.

The ministers were dazzled, like the Elector, with outside shew and splendour; they wanted to give themselves airs of consequence, and embarked in enterprizes to which the impoverished state of the country was not equal; the result was, that they got into a confusion which prevented them from knowing either their own strength,

strength, or that of the other powers they had to contend with. Universal dissipation produced falsehood, treachery, and every other vice; the most important posts were sold, or given to flattery and intrigue; one was made a privy-counsellor, because he danced well, and another a general, because he could blow the flute. I need not add, that women are ultimately the grand movers of the politics of such a court.

It is generally agreed on, that the Elector himself loved shew and expence more than he did women; but the scandalous chronicle of his court goes beyond all that has ever been heard of the kind, and his love of shew encouraged, at least, if it did not produce, the dissoluteness of his subjects. Amidst the intoxication of prosperity, the minister adopted a plan of operations it was impossible he should see the end of, and which left him at the discretion of the more powerful monarch, with whom he entered into a league against a dangerous neighbour. This was probably one of the most impolitic treaties which history has to recount. The Saxons entered into an alliance with Russia, which was so formidable to Poland; they attached themselves to Austria, which without them was stronger than the king of Prussia; and they endeavoured

deavoured to weaken the power of this last named monarch, who was able to maintain the balance of power in Germany. In all these three things they broke through the first maxim of a nation, which is in the midst of others, never to take the part of the strongest, but always that of the weakest. A minister whose preparatives were so weak, could not be expected to do much when he came to action. The king of Prussia fell upon the country as Charles XII. had fallen upon Poland, under Augustus the Second. The army, which was seventeen thousand men strong, and which was expected to do such mighty things, surrendered without striking a stroke, and no wonder, for some of the colonels were eunuchs.

This total rout by degrees waked the genius of Saxony from his slumbers; all the gentry of the country, excepting only the creatures of the minister, were in a flame; and now there was a chorus of creditors and complainants of all orders, who made a horrid dissonance with the Bacchanalian revels of former days.

All the world gave the country over for lost, nor could it have been saved but for the free course given to the extraordinary spirit of frugality and industry, which marks the people; and for a minister, who was as active and patriotic

as the other had been dissolute and cowardly. In one of my future letters I will give you an exact account of the present state of the country.

One of the wonders which makes the most noise here, is the celebrated *green vault*, or private treasury, in the electoral palace. You would naturally imagine they would be shy of shewing it to strangers, till what was carried to Holland and sold there during the last Silesian war was replaced; no such thing, they made no difficulties whatever, but the man who shewed it me, and two Russian noblemen in my company, assured me, that things were exactly in *statu quo*. The collection, after all, is still admirable; I am, however, of opinion, that the treasures of Vienna and Munich are but little inferior; and I am much deceived, if those of some cathedrals I have seen are not fully equal. The picture gallery, the collection of antiques, the prints, and the collection of natural history, are much greater objects of curiosity, in my eyes, than the *green vault*. The picture gallery is the most remarkable in Europe; besides the pictures in water-colours, it contains twelve hundred pieces of the best masters. Amongst them is the famous birth of Christ, commonly called *The Nativity*, by Corregio, which passes for the best work of that master;
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it cost above half a million of livres. Some persons, however, prefer *The St. George*, likewise by Corregio; this ought properly to be called *The Virgin*, for she is the principal figure in the piece, and the St. George, with other saints, is standing about her. The gallery contains several pieces by Carrachi, amongst which is his best work; it is a St. Roch giving alms; this picture is known in Italy by the name of *Opera dell' Elemosina*.

L E T T E R XLII.

Dresden.

THE longer I stay here, my dearest brother, the more I think myself at home; the manners, way of living, amusements, conversation, and, in short, all that belongs to the inhabitants of this place, make me think myself at Paris. I only wish that our ladies, both married and unmarried, were as fresh and as handsome as the ladies of this place are. I recollect that an Austrian lady made the following answer to a gentleman who was extolling the Saxon women in her company. ‘Give us only,’ said she, ‘as handsome and strong-built men, as the Saxons are, and we will take care of the rest.’

Eating and drinking do not go forwards here, quite so briskly as in the southern parts of Germany; in this respect, indeed, the difference betwixt the Saxons and Germans I have hitherto lived with is total. The broth here is so thin, the cookery sometimes so cold, and always so slender, that I do not believe an inhabitant of
Vienna

Vienna could make shift to live a month with a family in the middling ranks of life here. Indeed I have had occasion to observe, even in the very best houses, an attention to the cellar and kitchen, which in Austria and Bavaria would pass for poverty.

This rigid œconomy extends to every article of housekeeping. The only appearance of expence is in the article of dress; this, indeed, is carried farther here, than it is in the south of Germany. Every person in the middling rank of life, I might add in the lower ones too, men, as well as women, dress according to the fashion; whereas at Vienna, Munich, and other places I have visited, there is a kind of national dress, which persons even of a better kind conform to.

I lodge at a watchmaker's, whose two daughters have their regular *toilettes*, and have their hair dressed every day; on the other hand, they content themselves with a slice of bread and butter, or bread and cheese for supper, which I often partake of with them. There are hardly three noblemen's houses here which have stables with twenty horses in them; and porters, *valets de chambres*, &c. which make so great an object at Vienna, are very scarce. It is true, they call a footman here *valet de chambre*, as they do at

Paris, but the wages of a Vienna *valet de chambre* are twice as high as those of a Dresden one, though living at Vienna is as cheap again.—Here the women are not ashamed to go into their kitchens, tell out their candles and bits of candles, and calculate how long they will burn. In a word, excepting only the article of dress, every thing is in a style of the strictest economy.

There are very few rich people here; hardly any of the nobility have more than 30,000 florins a year, and most of the best houses have only from 15 to 20,000. As to the common people, they are always crying out on the want of money, the dearth of provisions, and the little that is to be got here by industry; and, if they compare things as they are now, with what they were under the late Elector, they have certainly some reason for their complaints, but I know no city in Germany, where there is such a general appearance of ease and plenty as there is here; extreme poverty is as rare as overgrown fortunes. The money in circulation is for the most part thrown into motion by the industry of the people, a thing which, more than any thing else, distinguishes this place from Vienna and Munich, which subsist only by the expences of the court, and the vices of the nobility.

This

This single town contains more manufacturers and useful artists than all Bavaria. They make a large quantity of ferges, woollen, and silk cloths, &c. with which they carry on a great trade all through Germany. As the money is got by such hard labour, it is not matter of wonder that they should be sparing of it.

The circumstances which the country was in during the reign of the late Elector, are by no means the most favourable to political prosperity. They remind one of a body which takes too much food and too little exercise, for the fluids to be equally distributed through the several canals. Some of the inhabitants of the place, with whom I have talked on the subject, have been forced to allow, that even during the time in which the court was in its greatest splendour, there was much more poverty amongst the lower classes than there is at present. The prodigality of the higher orders had tainted their inferiors, and the ease with which it was to be got lessened the value of money in the eyes of the possessors. The greatest part of it went to foreigners, without first circulating, as it should have done, amongst the natives. Flatterers, pimps, whores, projectors, dancers, singers, and the like, divided the booty of the court amongst them, and carried the greatest part of it out of

the country; only those who were near the court partook in any considerable degree of the spoils; the remainder was lost in so many narrow channels, that the greatest part of the people never got a share of it. Indeed, Munich is a visible instance, in our own day, how little even the most unlimited passion of a court for pleasure and expence can contribute to the well-being and true happiness of the inhabitants of a great city. I am ready, however, to allow, that there is less mirth here than there was formerly; at least it is certain, that the natural good-humour and joviality, which nature has given to these people, is often clouded over with a certain melancholy; this may be occasioned, as at Paris, by the recollection of their great debts, but I rather think it is owing to their uncommon and extraordinary œconomy, and the restraint this throws on the freedom of their minds. It is, however, certainly in consequence of this provident cast, that there is more true pleasure to be met with here than in any town of Germany I have hitherto visited. The people of Vienna and Munich know no other delight than to fill their paunches, divert themselves with the nonsense of a harlequin, and play at nine pins. All the gardens of the inns of Vienna are laid out in bowling-greens; I reckoned

twenty

twenty of them in one garden. Here they know how to mix intellectual pleasures with sensual ones. They, like us, are in the habit of making small country parties, and have a taste for the various beauties of nature: even amongst the middling ranks, there is a taste for the fine arts, and reading is almost universal; nor is the latter, as in the southern parts of Germany, confined within the narrow bounds of plays and romances, but it extends to good books of history, morality, and other important subjects. The society of nobles have a reader with a title and appointments. I think Mr. Pilati's observation of the difference there is betwixt the Protestant and Catholic parts of Germany in this respect a very just one: he says, that the young men of twenty in the former know more than many old literati by profession do in the latter. The difference struck me so much, that I felt as if I had just come out of Spain into France. All that they are endeavouring with so much clatter to introduce into the schools of Vienna, seems to have been done here some generations ago. A few days since, I visited a school in a village at a little distance from the town, and found more order and real instruction in it, than in the best schools at Vienna. The most ordinary people here display

in every thing a nice acquaintance with whatever regards good manners, and the conduct of social life. In the southern parts of the country, excepting only a small strip of Suabia, a common citizen is a stranger in his own circle, and thinks of nothing in the course of the week, but how to guggle on the Sunday.

The contrast betwixt the women of the two countries is equally striking. Those of the southern parts of Germany have nothing but their beauty, but these have beauty and animation too. They appear, however, soon to fade, and I saw few women past thirty, in whom the marks of old age were not apparent. Possibly this may be owing in some degree to their extreme vivacity; but I should rather think it owing to the slender nourishment, joined to their great labour, and the weight of their domestic cares. The Bavarian women perhaps excel those of Dresden in complexion, but the latter are much better made, and their countenances are much more interesting.

The theatres here are in the same state as all other public amusements which require expence. The inhabitants are too œconomical to pay for an entertainment, which the court formerly gave them for nothing, and the loss of which is easily made up for by the charms of their private societies.

TRAVELS THROUGH GERMANY. 169
cities. A few years ago, there was one of the

best company of comedians in all Germany here; the manager, Mr. Seiler, had no settled abode, but used to visit the fair of Leipfick, and the other neighbouring cities, where he got together all the actors he could pick up from different parts of the world, so that his company was at one time seventy-seven persons strong. He gave uncommon salaries for the master of a strolling company to give. Madam Helmet, one of the best singers in Germany, and now first singer to the court of Mentz, had 2000 thalers, near 200l. a year from him; at that time, however, he could easily afford to do these things, as no people in Germany were more attached to theatrical amusements, than the people of Leipfick and those of Dresden.—But these times are gone by, and their being so, convinces me that the people of this place have sounder heads than those of Vienna, Munich, and other places.—Mr. Seiler has latterly met with so little encouragement here, that after having contracted debt upon debt, and tried his fortune on the Rhine, in the end he is become a bankrupt. At present the court has a national theatre on the same plan with that of Vienna; that is, it pays the expences and takes the receipts; these last, however, are not very considerable,
owing

owing to the frugality of the people, so that it is probable this theatre will cease as the court theatre did at the beginning of the Bavarian war. Private theatres, especially those where children are the actors, flourish much more here than the national one does.

One of the most honourable and beautiful characteristics which distinguishes the Saxons from the inhabitants of the south of Germany, is their warm attachment for their native country, and the interest they take in every thing that relates to it; even far down in the middling ranks, every body here seems acquainted with the circumstances of both court and country: it was here that I heard, for the first time, the words *my country* pronounced with energy, and a kind of intelligent and honourable pride. The ladies of the place use their gallantry as ours do, as a spur to make the men do their duty; they bear a share in conversation on war, treaties, and every business of state; they love their officers and soldiers, and speak with pleasure of the actions in which they have distinguished themselves. The younger officers recommend themselves to them by assuming a military air, which, in my opinion, is unbecoming. Whenever they happen to mention the ministers who betrayed their country, it is
always

always with contempt and abhorrence.—Though the king of Prussia has not done much to gain their affections, they speak with wonder of his great actions, and think, with all mankind, that it would have been better for all parties if they had attached themselves to him, instead of uniting with the Austrians, towards whom, the person of the present Emperor alone excepted, every body shews great animosity, notwithstanding all that the country has suffered from the king of Prussia. In a word, brother, it is as if I was at home, where a participation in the common interests of the country animates every society, and is the life and soul of all company.

The Saxon troops have a very martial appearance; they are not, however, so well disciplined as the Austrian or Prussian ones, nor yet so stiff; they are like the English, who are only soldiers when they are in action, and do not trouble themselves much about the business at other times. They are as brave as any thing you can call brave, but at this time of day, bravery alone is not sufficient. They tell you a story of them, which would appear ridiculous, perhaps, in the eyes of a Prussian or Austrian commander, but which must recommend them to a friend of human nature, and a citizen of the world.

world. The officers of a Saxon regiment of dragoons, which made part of the army that fought against Prince Henry of Prussia in Bohemia, took an oath, *sub dio*, that they would put to death any of their number who should run away in action.

Of late there is a project set on foot to put the army, which consists of twenty-five thousand men, upon the same footing as the Prussian one, but hitherto the reform has not gone very deep; and, for my own part, I believe it to be as mad a scheme, as it would be to attempt making an English army adopt Prussian tactics.

LETTER XLIII.

Dresden.

IT is owing to the constitution of the country, that the Saxons are possessed of a quite different spirit from that of the Bavarians or Austrians. The power of the Elector is more limited than that of any other sovereign in Germany. The Saxon states have had spirit enough to maintain themselves in the possession of their rights, which most of the states belonging to other countries have lost, more through their own negligence and cowardice than by the despotism of the princes.

The court cannot make the smallest law without the consent of the states; these are made up of three orders, the abbots of *Merseburg*, *Meissen*, and *Naunburg*, as representatives of the clergy; the count *Schwartzburg*, *Solms*, *Stollburg*, and *Schomburg*, as the representatives of the higher nobility, and the universities of *Leipsick*, and *Wirtemberg*, compose the first; the second consists of the gentry belonging to the seven circles of the empire; the number of these is uncertain. A member of this body, besides eight quarters of nobility on the side of both father

father and mother, must possess a freehold estate; but if, which is often the case, he has even three or four of them, he has only a single vote; so that the exercise of the office is more attached to the person than the property. The representatives of the towns, in number one hundred and two, form the third order. The general assemblies meet only every six years, but there is a deputation, which commonly assembles every two years, to consider of all the extraordinary cases that come before it. These states do not only direct the levy of taxes, and attend to the payment of debts, but they watch over *fidei commissa*, the maintenance of the established religion, the non-alienation of the electoral lands, and various other matters. The constitution of the *Lawsnifs* is the same in every respect.

The payment of the debts is what gives them the most employment; the whole of these amount to twenty-six millions of thalers, of Saxon money, or something more than 2,600,000 pounds. They pay every year about 1,200,000 guilders, or 154,100 pounds.

If you add to this, three and a half per cent. of interest, it will be a long time before the debt is paid.

But notwithstanding this, the state treasury is in very good credit, as it is secure from all

manœuvres of the court, and distinguished by the most exact rectitude: when the country was almost exhausted by the distresses of the last war, and its credit much impaired, the bills fell considerably; this gave rise to the speculations of some foreign and domestic merchants, who bought up the bills at a low price. Three years, however, were not elapsed before it became visible that the country had sufficient resources, and the paper rose to its original value. Most of the speculators gained from 50 to 60 per cent. The wonderful alteration struck the merchants of Hamburg, Lubeck, Bremen, and Holland, and the states proceeded to pay the remainder of the debts, which by this manœuvre had been already in a great degree discharged by their subjects.

The revenue of the country amounts to about 6,200,000 thalers, or about 620,000 pounds. The taxes are all appropriated by the states to specific purposes; nor can the Elector make any alteration in the destination of them without their consent. He has his own privy purse, to the supply of which particular revenues are also appropriated. The states have agreed, that the army shall be increased in the same proportion as the debts lessen. Each prince of the blood has a revenue of 50,000 thalers, or
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about 5000l. which, as the present family is exceeding numerous, is a considerable article.— The Imperial court considered it as a great act of condescension, to suffer a Saxon prince of this court to marry the archduchess Christina; but the Saxons tell you, that great as the honour was, it would have been still greater, if the magnificence of the Imperial court had enabled the duke of Saxe Teschen to do without this allowance.

There are few countries in Germany, which, in proportion to the size of it, produce as good a revenue as Saxony. It is true, that the taxes are very high, but there are few other countries who have strength enough to bear such; and as the exchequer is in the hands of true patriots, and effectually secured against any attempts of the court, what is paid is sure to be employed to the best advantage of the country.

There is nothing more striking in the political world, than the difference betwixt Bavaria and Saxony. Both countries are of an equal size, and enjoy an equal number of natural advantages. Both have also a constitution, only the Bavarians have of late years fold, and even paid away their privileges; both are parts of a circle, and yet the first contains eighteen large, and two hundred and six small towns; whereas
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the latter has only forty in all, amongst which there is not one, Munich only excepted, that is to be compared, I do not say in riches, but in population, with the smallest of the eighteen Saxon towns; and there are at least fifty out of the two hundred and six small Saxon towns, which are richer than the richest of the Bavarian ones. Saxony has one million nine hundred thousand; Bavaria, one million one hundred and eighty thousand inhabitants. The first raises above eleven millions of guilders; the latter not more than six millions. Saxony has a much greater debt, but the debt is in the way to be paid, and the country was able to raise twenty thousand men to join the Prussian army in rescuing Bavaria from the House of Austria; whilst Bavaria could only raise six thousand men, in order to have the appearance of entering a protestation against the Austrian pretensions, and its debts remain unpaid.

It is not uncommon in Germany to ascribe these political differences to the difference of religion; but why then does not the same religion produce the same effects in France, Tuscany, Genoa, Venice, the Imperial Netherlands, and Austria, all which are flourishing countries, notwithstanding that the inhabitants are not Protestants? Shall we say, that the catholicism of Ba-

varia is of a better kind for the purposes of theology, and of a worse for those of politics? or that the fault lies chiefly in the government, which has the same influence on religion as the air has on the barometer? Religious enthusiasm is not of itself hurtful to industry and social virtues, as is evident by the example of the English independants and Quakers, who are active and alert enough, notwithstanding their religious creed. No religion necessarily requires a corruption of manners, wantonness, or laziness. When, therefore, a religion proves hurtful to the state, it arises from the mode of education, the manners, the government, and other local circumstances. Under a weak administration religion breaks out into abuse, from the interested views of its ministers, and the folly and stupidity of the people; but every other human institution does the same; so that I believe every religion, like every government, to be good, when it is well administered. A wise and efficient regency is omnipotent; and the example of Peter the Great has shewn clearly enough, that a wise man may make every religion contribute to render a state flourishing. With respect to opinions, the religion of the multitude is nearly alike in all places. It

almost

almost universally consists in a blind submission to the authority of the priest. I have seen enough to convince me of this, in some Protestant countries, which pass for the most enlightened in religious matters. The great difference betwixt mankind, that by which some are made good and others bad citizens, depends upon the morals, which are a consequence of the education, and with which religious *opinions* have little to do.* I shall make you understand my sentiments on this subject better in my next letter, in which I mean to say something of the reformation, but, in the mean time, I cannot help communicating some remarks I have made upon the subject in my journey through Germany, as they serve to illustrate my position.

In almost all the Catholic states I have travelled through, I have met with Italians who were most of them in affluence. All these came beggars into Germany, and have made their fortunes in a foreign country, without any domestic assistance whatsoever. It is not more than thirty or forty years ago, that almost all the rich merchants in the middling and lesser states of Germany were Italians. I think this sufficient to prove, that the industry and frugality by which these people have made their fortunes, are no

attributes of a particular mode of religion, but arise from circumstances in the local character, which mostly takes its colour from education. The frugal, deep-thinking, and industrious *Walsbes* have *capital* sufficient in their character, easily to gain an advantage in the management of worldly matters, over the lazy, dissipated, and stupid German Roman Catholics, though the religion of both be the same. I have spoken with some of these Italian *parvenus*, who complained bitterly, that it was much more difficult to make a fortune in Germany now than it had formerly been. No doubt, but that this is owing to a much better mode of education having been introduced by the government amongst the people with whom they have do. Is there any man, who is not astonished at the different degrees of industry which prevail among the Italians themselves? and yet they all have the same religion.—There is, perhaps, less superstition at Rome, than in any part of the Roman Catholic world; but are the Romans therefore more industrious than the Genoese, who are the grossest bigots known? Mind, I am not speaking of the discipline of the church, nor of the riches of the cloysters, nor yet of *Annates*, *Palliums*, dispensations, and other popish tributes, nor even of the usurpation of the spiritual power and the like, all of which
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may be very hurtful to a state, but do not belong to the essence of religion. The dispute is only on the influence which speculative opinions have on the industry of men. In my opinion they have none. It is an observation every day made, that a man may be the most superstitious of mortals in some things, and yet the sharpest and most clear-sighted of all mankind in others; nor are the Saxons, according to my way of thinking, indebted to their more philosophical religion, for the greater degree of happiness they enjoy as citizens.

The religion of the court of this place is not well calculated to lessen the prejudices of the Saxon public against Catholicism. It is formed upon the Jesuit plan, and I have already told you, that the German Jesuits are of all monks the greatest. I was told an anecdote, which is certainly true, and does the court ecclesiastics no great honour. At the beginning of the present reign, the Jesuits were afraid that the sovereign might change the national religion; for, besides that he was at that time very young; he loved his people, and had had overtures made him on the subject. The Electress too, a very penetrating, and, in every respect, amiable woman, was much dissatisfied with the Jesuits. To prevent

innovations, a spectre appeared to the duke, and after having threatened him with all the torments of hell-fire, if he ventured to make the purposed change, forbad him to say any thing of what had happened, and promised to return again at a certain period. The duke was very pensive for some time, at length his wife, who loved him as he deserved, wrung the secret from him, and told it to the prince of who waited for the spirit on the appointed night, and put him to death with his Spanish toledo. The following day he came into company and said, ‘ I have saved myself the payment of 500 thalers, by accidentally killing my confessor.’

Notwithstanding his little tinge of German jesuitism, the Elector is a most amiable prince; he knows none of the vices, which princes who are obliged to trust the greatest part of their business to their ministers, generally addict themselves to. He has also understanding and activity sufficient to form a right judgment of important affairs, which he often carries through entirely, either by his personal exertions, or the orders he gives for the purpose. All his ministers likewise are men who deserve his confidence. They are well informed and industrious patriots, who, both with regard to foreign affairs and internal
administration,

administration, follow a uniform system, a thing, amongst many others, by which they distinguish themselves from the Bavarian ministers. Their entering into the Bavarian war, as they did some years ago, was a certain proof of their not being wanting in spirit, though their hands were somewhat cramped by the internal circumstances of the country. When once the money, which now goes towards discharging the interest and principal of the debts, can be applied to the augmentation of the army, and the court is enabled to make use of its whole strength, no doubt the minister will take other ground than that he now stands upon. The country will then be in a state to keep up an army of forty or fifty thousand men, without any uncommon exertion, and of course will be always able to maintain a neutrality. As things are now circumstanced, it must necessarily take a side, and attach itself either to Prussia or Austria. As long as the peace lasts, it gives equal hopes to both sides; but, in case of a breach, it will, in my opinion, incline rather to the Prussian than the Austrian party, not merely on account of the attempts which the Austrians are daily making to enslave the empire, and the weight which their enormous power gives to those attempts, but be-

cause the Saxons, on their part, have many private reasons for being dissatisfied with the conduct of the Imperial court towards them.

The difference there is betwixt the religion of the prince and that of the people, has no effect on the national business. It is not therefore probable that this court will ever sacrifice its religion to its temporal interests, as Augustus did when he ascended the throne of Poland, if they should come into competition.

In Germany religion is naturally various. The house of Wirtemberg has every sect of Christendom in it. The family of prince Frederick Eugene is Lutheran; the great dutchess has embraced the Greek religion, and the bride of the hereditary prince of Tuscany will, no doubt, turn Catholic. As there are likewise princesses of Brandenburg in this house, it has also a mixture of Calvinism in it. Certainly this is the surest way to spread toleration throughout Europe, and the friends of mankind are much indebted to the princes of Germany for it. With respect to the Saxons, if the reigning monarch were a prince of less sense than he is, they are perfectly safe from the fear of all religious persecutions. The states have so limited his power in this respect, as to oblige him to have only two
Catholic

Catholic privy counsellors. This is the reason why, notwithstanding the animosity of the Saxons against the Catholics, which is much greater than most people imagine, they have a great affection for their prince.

L E T T E R XLIV.

Leipſick.

SAXONY is a princely country, brother. I have taken a conſiderable tour, and have come hither through the *Ertzgeberg*, over Freyberg, Marienberg, Annaberg, and then over Swickau, and Altenburg. One would imagine that the number of hills which border Bohemia muſt be entirely undermined. There are pits upon pits dug in them, and all the valleys reſound with hammers. A more induſtrious people than the Saxons I have not yet ſeen. The whole chain of mountains is filled with men, who force their nourishment from the naked woods. They not only work ſtones and minerals in every poſſible way you can conceive, but every town has beſides ſome manufacture of linen, lace, ribbands, cotton, handkerchiefs, flannel, or ſomething elſe, which takes up an innumerable quantity of hands. When faſhion, or the caprice of their neighbours, ruin one manufactory, they have always ten others to ſet up to make up for the loſs.

Freyberg.

Freyberg contains upwards of twenty-five thousand, and Swickau upwards of fifteen thousand inhabitants. The other cities I saw are like the market towns, uncommonly populous and animated.—The same industry and easy circumstances are met with on the other side of the Elbe, throughout the Lausitz, whither I made an excursion from Dresden. Bauffen, Gorlitz, and Zittaw, are stately cities, full of trade and business. What a contrast with the southern parts of Germany! an immense tract, throughout the whole of which I did not see a single place, excepting the residence of the court, and some Imperial cities, which could bear a comparison with any of these Saxon towns.—You would imagine that the Ertzgebirg and forest of Thuringia, had been set by Providence as the limits betwixt light and darkness, industry and laziness, freedom and slavery, riches and poverty. Possibly you cannot find in the whole world so strong a contrast betwixt two people, who are so near each other, as there is between the Saxons and Bohemians; and yet nature has done infinitely more for the last than she has for the first.

The mines are an inexhaustible source of riches to this country; they almost all belong to companies of private men. The works are divided
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into certain portions, part of which the company works free of costs for the court, which receives what is got from them. The revenue of the court, from all the mines of the country, is estimated at 400,000 guilders, which is hardly a fifth part of what they produce. A still much more considerable sum is gained by manufacturing the produce, as very little of it is exported raw. The Saxons prepare steel and copper, and have a great number of gold and silver manufactories. The Saxon arms are known all over the world.

The Saxons have distinguished themselves by their skill in mining all over Europe. It is spoken of even by Spanish and Neapolitan writers. Their strong bodies, their indefatigable industry, and their good understanding, particularly qualify them for this kind of employment, which is undoubtedly the most complicated and laborious of all human occupations, and which requires the greatest variety of knowledge to bring to perfection. In my opinion, mining is one of the strong characteristics which distinguishes the Germans, particularly the Saxons, from our countrymen. The Frenchman, though much quicker, is easily conquered by difficulties, is dispirited when the first heat does not get the better

of the opposition, is fond of changing the object of his pursuit, is desirous of getting a great deal at once, in a word, is only adapted to enterprizes, which require a quick comprehensive genius and readiness; he is consequently much less fit for this work, than the cold, pensive, inquisitive, penetrating, persevering, and indefatigable German, who can employ himself in the most unthankful offices without being weary. No doubt, there are many valuable mines in the French dominions. Every body knows the projects of Colbert and his successors. They have been taken up again in our own time by M. Turgot; but the genius of the nation has hitherto counteracted every effort of the kind that has been made.

The inhabitants of the smallest villages in the Saxon mountains, though often shut out from the world by hills on each side, are more polished, better bred, and more alive, than those of the largest towns in the south of Germany.

Reading is almost universal in this country; sociability and hospitality accompany and encourage the hardest labour; even the societies of the inferior ranks are distinguished by the liberality, knowledge of the world, wit, and jollity to be met with in them. The women are throughout remarkable for the beauty of their shapes,

shapes, the animation of their looks, and their infinite spirit, ease, and vivacity, and yet they are quite good natured, and admirable housewives. The men have of late, indeed, began to complain a little, that, for some time past, their beautiful partners have been too much addicted to vanity; but their clamours would soon cease, if the women were to unite and make a law, that every eighth or tenth man should take an Austrian or Bavarian wife, for the edification of the whole community. . For my own part, the article of drefs alone excepted, I have not been able to discover a single excrescence which wants pruning; whereas the Bavarian and Austrian women, besides being full as fond of drefs, break out a little both at bed and board, and do not concern themselves at all with domestic matters.

The uncommonly large population of this country exposes the inhabitants to no small distress in times of scarcity. The land does not produce a tenth part of the grain necessary for the consumption of the people, who are obliged to supply their wants from Bohemia. The universal scarcity which prevailed in Europe nine or ten years ago, was no where more severely felt than here. Many thousands died, a part through absolute want, and a part from being

ing obliged to eat bad provisions. Great numbers were indebted for their lives to the free-mason's lodges at Dresden, Leipfick, Fridburg, and other places, the members of which did an incredible deal for the relief of the necessities of their brethren. If any country stands in need of granaries, it is this. As soon as the smallest scarcity is perceived, the exportation from the neighbouring countries is stopped up, and the Saxon plains are too much peopled easily to bear the loss of their harvest. Government has made some regulations; but in the present state of the finances of the country, it is impossible that it should do as much as would be requisite to secure the inhabitants of the mountains against every event.

Conspicuous as the industry and commerce of this people is, the situation of the farmer amongst them is in all respects pitiable. The fault, however, is in the constitution of the country, not in the inhabitants, who are a frank, diligent, and intelligent people. No doubt, but the distress is owing to the quantity of land in the hands of great farmers. Along the foot of the Ertzgeberg mountain, and in the plain, you can hardly count the steeples, which you see on all sides of you. The number of villages in the Electoral territory, taking in the *Lausitz*, is near

six thousand. I saw several farmers who ploughed with one ox and one cow. Many of them have only one cow, which furnishes them with milk, and likewise serves them to plough with. It is true, indeed, that the fine and light soil of this part of the world requires, in general, no uncommon exertion; but it is impossible that a farmer should do well with so little cattle. You easily discover in their housekeeping, that they are obliged to cut very close. Great part of them live upon potatoes, cabbage, and turnips, and you very seldom see meat at their tables. Their attachment to coffee is extremely great; it is the only nourishment of some of them; and the profuse use they make of it, is a strong contrast with their penuriousness in other respects. It is made in large pots, but is so weak as to have hardly the colour of the berry. Most likely they consider it as the cheapest and most strengthening of liquors. Their cleanliness in the midst of their poverty is remarkable.—The Suabian farmers are lords, in comparison with those of Saxony, and, on the whole, the happiest I have yet seen.

Throughout the whole level country, even the common people speak good German, and so, excepting in the mountains, do all the farmers. There is no province in France of a like extent,
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in which the people throughout speak French as well as the Saxons do German. Some miles from Leipfick I visited a gentleman, for whom I had letters from Dresden, on his estate. I thought myself come to a school of pastoral felicity, and I shall ever look upon the few days I spent with him as some of the happiest of my life. The estates of these gentlemen are small, as the Saxon nobility in general are as poor as they are numerous; but it is to this very poverty that they owe their happiness. They understand how to unite the beautiful with the useful, taste with simplicity, œconomy with various amusements, and nature with art, in such a manner as to make that business, which other men look upon as a punishment, a source of endless uninterrupted felicity. They relish pleasure as epicureans do rich wines, which they keep a long while on the palate, in order to relish the flavour. They understand how to mix the amusements and the occupations of the country so as to make them follow each other in agreeable succession so well, that it is worth while to come amongst them to read Virgil's Georgics, which I am persuaded cannot be read any where else with so much pleasure. Fishing is a very weighty and most important business with them,

and the art has been no where brought to so great a perfection as it is here. They have separate ponds in which the fish are kept, according to their ages and with different intentions. These ponds are in fallow lands, which are at certain times broke up and ploughed again; so that the estate reaps a double advantage by this method. The management of woods and of sheep is also brought to a great degree of perfection here. They not only cut down their trees with great judgment, but study the art of planting, and what trees are fit for each soil with singular felicity. I am persuaded, that we Frenchmen might learn much of the Saxons on this head, as well as on every other part of rural œconomy.

The Saxon wool is famous for being the best in Europe, after the Spanish and English: sometimes it is used raw, sometimes it is manufactured into clothes, stockings, and gloves, but most generally it is coloured and exported as a manufacture. The inimitable blue wools, which have their name from the country, are brought into France.

To these various practical and theoretical improvements of their lands, the nobility add small walks, visits to their friends in town and country, collections of nature and art, attention

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to improve the schools of their districts, poetry, and musick. The rich, amongst whom I reckon those who have from 8 to 10,000 guilders a year, (most of them have only from 3 to 6, and several from 800 to 2000 guilders,) come to town for only one or two months in the year. Their daughters are the loveliest and cleverest creatures in the world. Their natural sensibility generally contracts a romantic turn in the stillness of the country, which appears in their conversation and actions, and leads them to take unguarded steps in the first years of life. Unequal marriages and elopements are extremely frequent here. In Suabia, Bavaria, and Austria, I met with Saxon girls of good family, who in the last Silesian war had enlisted with officers of the imperial and circular armies, and who all made excellent wives and mothers. At Prague I met with a Saxon girl of a good family, who partly from a considerable share of sensibility, as she confessed herself, with tears in her eyes, and partly from want of knowledge of the world, was a common woman. Lessing's comedy, *Minna von Barnheim*, which doubtless you have read, exhibits some of the romantic part of this character, but in general it is more a picture of the town ladies. The country girls have not in general the coquetry and liveliness of Minna :

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they are more pensive and more tender, but all of them are as handsome as angels. The kind of reading in fashion in Germany, which is mostly novels and romances, is no proper nourishment for the ladies of Saxony, who are by nature of such inflammable constitutions.

Leipstick is a very small, but very handsome, and in some places, splendid city. The number of its inhabitants, reckoning the suburbs, amounts to near thirty thousand; it was greater formerly. The way of living is totally different from any I have hitherto seen in the other Saxon towns. Much more luxury and profusion reigns here than at Dresden. They play in all companies, and often extremely high. The ladies of this place are far behind hand with their countrywomen of the other towns in domestic œconomy, but agree with them in the articles of dress and coquetry. Amongst the literati, who swarm here, there are too many boasters, *petit maitres*, ignoramusses, and fools of all sorts; so that I sometimes thought myself got to Vienna again, where the *friseurs* and literati meet in the same companies, and are almost equally numerous. But the infinite number of men of merit, whose conduct and manners do honour to their native country, soon made

made me find out the difference. You meet here with men in all sciences, who, from the extent, as well as the depth of their learning, but particularly from their knowledge of the world, are entirely different from the Vienna literati, for whom all is dead that is out of their own line.

I paid a visit to Mr. Weisse, whose excellent work called the *Children's Friend*, Mr. Berquin proposes partly to imitate, and partly to translate. The author is not only one of the best German poets, but an extraordinary learned man, in the most extensive signification of the word. He is elegance itself; and the income of a good place, which he possesses, enables him to give up his latter days to philosophical repose, benevolence, and the muses. He is one of the determined enemies of those literary Calmucks, I mentioned to you in my letter on the theatre of Munich, who like the troops of Gengiskan, some years since made an inroad upon Parnassus, drove out the the muses, destroyed the flower-beds of the old German poets, mangled the language, hacked the words with Tartar fury, and would probably in their rage have begotten children like the fathers, if their discipline had answered the violence of their attack,

and such enlightened men as Mr. Weisse had not discomfitted them after the ardour of their first onset. They have been compelled to retreat behind the hedges, whence they sometimes fire upon passengers, but they will not be able to keep even this post long.

L E T T E R XLV.

Leipfick.

THE commerce and manufactures of this place are very considerable. It is the center of the book trade of all Germany, and of the wool trade of all Saxony, and there are few cities in Germany which surpass it in commerce and exchange. Here they make velvets, woven silks, shags, linens, cloths, rattines, carpets, and a great variety of other things. This city supplies the greatest part of Saxony with drugs and apothecaries wares, and has a considerable share of the trade which is carried on betwixt the south of Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and the North. There are several wealthy houses here.

The fair, which ended a week before my arrival, according to the report of both natives and foreign merchants, is no more than a shadow of what it was thirty years ago. The most remarkable part of the present trade, is the exchange of books, carried on by the German booksellers. This they sometimes execute by commission, but for the most part they appear in their own *high persons*. Their number is about

three hundred, and the value of the books they exchange amounts to 500,000 rix-dollars, or about 1,751,000 livres.

Leipstick maintains itself in the possession of this trade, not so much from its having once taken that channel, as from the great quantity of books published in the city itself, and its central situation in the midst of a country where all the arts flourish, and reading and writing are most universal. These are the causes, which, in my opinion, have rendered all the attempts to deprive the city of this trade abortive.

The Austrian booksellers have hitherto been the only ones who have not appeared regularly and in great numbers at this mart of literature. The restraint they lay under from the licence office, and the restraints they are lain under by the heavy wit of their writers, have disabled them from bringing any *paper* to market, good enough to procure an exchange from the other dealers.

Leipstick is indebted for this trade, which, in my opinion, is the only one of the kind in all Europe, entirely to the merit of the inhabitants of this place, and other parts of Saxony. Saxony was the cradle of literature and taste in Germany. The Swiss had indeed contributed something by theories towards raising the edifice of
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the arts, but theories form neither arts nor taste, nor has the German part of Switzerland produced a single literary production of merit, Gesner's works excepted. Those of Haller are written in a barbarous dialect, and few of them are uniformly good. His beauties are single ones; they are separate pictures, woven into philosophical declamations. Nature gives the first direction to art, which afterwards is not to be improved by any theories, but by the sight of, and sensibility for, the most striking and most beautiful objects of nature. These it is, which form the original artist. And it is the reading, feeling, and comparing the works of these original artists, that form the imitator. Nor is taste itself a consequence of any theoretical knowledge; for it is well known, that those who have formed the soundest theories, have been very unsuccessful, both in the works produced by themselves, and the judgment they have passed upon those of other people. Theories depend upon conclusions of the understanding, which will always be false when the premises are so; but the quickness occasioned by the perception and comparison of various beautiful objects, which constitutes what we call taste, will never go astray. It is true, indeed, that
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this perception and quickness cannot exist without some natural dispositions towards them.

The first seeds of literature and taste were sown in Germany, by persons who were no literati by profession. Since the first æra of French taste, one or the other of the princes of Germany have always been in alliance with France. The negociations this has given rise to, and the abode of the French armies in Germany in consequence, have rendered the knowledge of French absolutely necessary to the German nobility. Hence all persons of consequence, ministers, counsellors, officers, and secretaries, polished themselves by their intercourse with our countrymen; so that the taste of several German courts was formed before there was a man of letters of consequence in the country. Prince Eugene, who had been brought up at the court of France, laboured with all his might to introduce the arts into Germany, but he found the Jesuits in his way at the court of Vienna, for a long time the only one in which the French language could not gain admittance. In all the others there were persons of as much taste and good sense as prince Eugene, true children of the Muses, who were more or less successful in their attempts to extend good taste. Much in the same manner the arts came to

us from Italy, and much in the same manner they came to Italy from Greece.

After this intercourse with France, the only thing wanting to awaken the Germans to emulation, was a language, and in this respect Saxony had a great advantage over the other German provinces. Ever since the time of Luther, this country has had a manner of writing, which distinguished it from the barbarous manner of the schools that obtained over the rest of Germany. The service of the church contributed much in these parts to the improvement of the language. The schools for young people were very good here long before the brilliant æra of German literature. The language of some of the Saxon writers who lived betwixt the years 1715 and 1725, a time in which the rest of Germany was still plunged in the barbarous style of the *Cancellaria*, is remarkable for its grammatical clearness and accuracy. The natural wit of the Saxons, together with their peculiar and, as it were, innate love for all that is beautiful, soon made it their peculiar pride and pleasure, as it had been that of the Athenians, to distinguish themselves by speaking their language correctly. The lowest handicraftsman here is more solicitous to speak purely and well, and is much
more

more fortunate in his attempts for the purpose, than several learned men by profession, with whom I have had the honour to converse in the southern parts of the country. The very women are sensible of grammatical errors, and take notice of them. Besides the language, the Saxons had other advantages, which contributed to spread literature sooner and wider amongst them than amongst the other Germans. Philosophy and the higher parts of the *belles lettres*, had had the dust rubbed from them in this country long before the bright æra of German literature. Leibnitz, Puffendorf, Thomafius, Wolf, and others, had broken up the extensive field of literature, had ploughed it with taste and simplicity, and had brought about a happy revolution in the minds of the people in all the north of Germany, particularly in Saxony. The celebrated journal, known by the name of *Acta Eruditorum*, was begun in 1682, and was soon equal to the journals of the most enlightened nations, such as the *Journal des Sçavans*, the English Transactions, and the *Giornale di Letterati*, whilst in the other states of Germany, Berlin not excepted, knowledge was confined to a few persons about the court. The beginning of the present century also produced several editions of the ancient classics, which contributed more

to the nurture of genius and true taste, than the best rules and theories.

No doubt, the magnificence and peculiar taste of the Saxon Augustus, for the fine arts, contributed much to the early polishing of taste, and the awakening of genius in this country. All the arts have a sisterly affection for each other; they do not like to be long out of the same company. Painting, sculpture, architecture, music, and all the arts connected with them, flourished more at the court of Augustus the third, than they did in any court of Europe. From this school came Mengs, the greatest painter of our days; Haffé, who was able to do justice to the poetry of a Metastasio; Gluck, Hiller, and many others. The art of speech would naturally join itself to so brilliant a society. The opera made the Saxons acquainted with the Italian poets, just as the language of the court had brought them acquainted with the French ones. At length they made some trials in their own language, and their trials were successful. Gellert, Rabbener, and many others, evidently formed themselves upon English models. Ever since this period, Saxony has furnished a much larger proportion of ingenious men than the other parts of Germany. In polite literature their numbers surpass those

those of all the rest of Germany put together. Their translators, reviewers, magazine-writers, almanack and catalogue-makers are innumerable. There are many persons in this country as well acquainted with the antient and modern literature of England, France, and Italy, as the natives of these countries themselves. There is always a warehouse of Spanish and Portuguese literature here, and (which is almost peculiar to Germany,) they forage to the uttermost bounds of the north, and explore the Danish, Swedish, Russian, and Polish Parnassus. As far as regards the mechanical part of the business, *i. e.* the working up of materials and making them fit for sale, Saxony will for a long time continue superior to the other Germans; but their genius seems worn out. Nothing can be more frivolous than the present pursuits of the men of genius here; but other parts of Germany are in the prime of youth, and others again seem to be just awake.

L E T T E R XLV.

Leipſick,

I MADE an excursion from hence to Weimar and Gotha. This part of the country is the beſt cultivated, and in a political view, the moſt beautiful I have hitherto ſeen in Germany. Every two or three miles you come to a town, which contains a flouriſhing manufacture. The villages are innumerable, and the agriculture much more varied than on the other ſide of Dresden. Nature appears to have been more favourable to theſe parts.

Weimar is a ſmall but handſome town. The court is remarkably affable, and the reigning duke carries popularity as well as philoſophy almoſt too far. He puts himſelf on a level with all kinds of perſons, and takes parts in private plays acted by his ſervants and the literati of his court.

To a natural fondneſs for the ſentimental and adventurous, he unites an excellent improved taſte for every thing that belongs to the arts. This court is made up entirely of wits, and even his *general ſuperintendant*, (a title you are not acquainted

quainted with, but which answers to a little Pope,) is a *bel esprit*, who has published a rhapsodical extract from the first book of Moses, under the title of the *Origin of Mankind*.

The wonderful character of this duke, the romantic part of it only excepted, for which he has to thank Mr. Gothe, is the work of the celebrated Wieland. Wieland is, without a doubt, the first of all the German writers. No writer, Lessing alone excepted, unites so much study with so much genius as he does. He has not only formed and fixed his taste on a thorough acquaintance with the beauties of the ancient writers, but possesses also all the literature of France, Italy, and England. His works are not like the rhapsodies of the modern German poetasters, but have the true smack of the art. Even the most fugitive trifles that fall from his playful and humorous pen, bespeak a workman who is thorough master of his business, and has a manner of his own. It has been said of the great painters, that you may know them by the dash of their pencils. Wieland is one of the few German writers who will go down to posterity as a classical writer, when the works of several of his cotemporaries shall serve for dung of the fields. It is generally objected to him, that he repeats the same things too often, and
copies

copies himself; but for my part, I have not observed much repetition. It is true, that like other great writers, he has favourite ideas, which he is ever turning and polishing, in order to set them before the reader in every point of view. I have no fault to find with him, but that he hides his study too little, exposes his immense reading too much, and often forgets that his reader may not be so enamoured with his erudition as he is himself. I likewise think, that before he was privy-counsellor and tutor to the prince, he wrote much more naturally than he does now. In order that no part of literature should be unexplored by him, but more with a view of filling his purse, whilst his reputation was at the height, he undertook a literary journal, which he carried on with uncommon spirit and activity. None of the German writers know so well how to please the public as Wieland does. He is most fruitful in the invention of trifles, in order to make his journal, which is as good as any other we have, sell. Sometimes, like a Dutch tobacco-merchant, he will tie a picture to his wares; sometimes he promises in one number a solution of a riddle in a past one, and in the next, instead of a solution of the riddle, gives you a rattle, or a trumpet for children to

play with. At times he publishes one number in a year, at others he will write the whole volume in a month. Riddles, newspapers, anecdotes, literary quarrels, every thing, in a word, is crammed in that may give his wares the appearance of novelty, or amuse the people. You will say these are little bookfelling tricks; and so they are, but they are more venial in a German than in other authors, as without them it would be difficult for the greatest industry and the greatest talents to live by the profession.

Wieland is, what few poets are, a good domestic man. He lives, in fact, more for his family than for the public. He would furnish a new proof, if there wanted any, of the justice of a favourite aphorism with me, to wit, that the generative powers of man are in the same proportion as his understanding, and that it is good for him when he uses the one with as much order and œconomy as the other. Wieland has seven or eight fine children. No poet, he observes himself, ever had so many; and he has written the lives of the poets, solely to assure himself of the truth of it. A good pension from the court, added to what he gets by his journal, enables him to see the approach of old age with tranquillity, and gives him the prospect of enjoying the comforts of life to the end.

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There are some extraordinary traits in Wieland's character, which seem a contrast to his writings: I will give you some of them. In all he has written, he discovers great knowledge of the world, and you would take him for a courtier out of place, yet no man knows less of mankind. In polite circles, and in the conduct of a common affair of life, he is entirely at a loss. Even since the publication of the *Agathon*, which you know contains every evolution and revolution of the female mind, and, like his other works, bespeaks one of the politest writers that ever existed; there have been several instances of his not knowing how to converse with a woman. His knowledge of the gay world consists entirely in theory, and he must be some time in company, before he can make use of it. This is not altogether owing to continual study and want of intercourse with the polite world, but is in some degree constitutional in him. He is by nature very lively, but not very resolute, diffident of himself, and easy of belief towards others; in fine, he is one of those men to whom nature has refused every grain of that self-sufficiency, a small dose of which is of so much use in the affairs of this life. His knowledge of the world is of the kind which *Montaigne* observed

observed in a man who resembled him; *it is in a place which he knows where to find it in, and not in himself.* The consciousness of this has sometimes made him a coward. To this cause are to be attributed the frequent variations in his way of thinking; his flattery towards those who can serve him; his submission towards those who resist him; his toleration of those whose opinions are opposite to his own; his love of party, and all the manœuvres to which he has had recourse, whenever he has thought his reputation in danger, for which reputation he would have had nothing to fear, if he had but known his own strength. Before Gothe was known, Wieland stood as he ought always to have done, at the top of the German Parnassus. It so happened, that, contrary to his intention, he inserted a very severe critique of *Goth's Play of Goss of Berlichingen*, in his review. Gothe revenged himself by a farce, written in his strongest manner. Wieland, ever ready to found a retreat when danger is nigh, endeavoured to make his peace in a second number, in which he was more civil. This, however, would hardly have saved him, but fortunately for him, his pupil, the reigning duke, soon after went to Francfort, where he met with Gothe, whom he brought with him to Weimar, and of course introduced

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him to his old tutor. Would you believe it? the cajoled Wieland not only took something of Gothe's manner himself, but wrote apologies for some followers of his school, whom in his former writings he had satyrized. Upon the whole, he is one of the greatest sophists of our days, who has always a satire, or an apology ready, and produces that which brings him the most pence.

Gothe is the duke's favourite; they are always together; he possesses a full portion of that which nature has refused to Wieland. Formerly his self-sufficiency led him into absurdities, but since that time things have much changed. He is not only a genius, but possesses a great deal of learning. Many circumstances, for which he is not entirely answerable, were the occasion of his giving the signal to a horde of Calmucks, who some years since made an inroad on the German Parnassus, and laid it waste. In all things he is upon principle, for the natural, the extraordinary, the adventurous, the striking, and the bold, and has as great an aversion to the common forms of government, as to the common rules of writing. His philosophy borders nearly upon that of Rousseau. I shall not stop here to compare them, but only observe, that they have both come two hundred years

too late, and that the man who gives a flat contradiction to the opinions of all his cotemporaries, abounds either in self-opinion or self-love.—When Gothe first began to feel his genius, he used to go about with a short hat, his hair about his ears, an out of the way dress; and, in short, affected a singularity in every thing. His looks, his gait, his speech, the whole of him bespoke, an extraordinary man. Even in his writings, he rather affected graceful negligence than any laboured delicacy. He shortened all his periods in the most extraordinary manner, used common and vulgar words, and, what was of no great service to the poor German language, already so bare of them, cut off half of the vowels, and introduced pauses and strokes of admiration at every three words. His writings contain a great deal of that happy seizure of circumstance which bespeaks a knowledge of mankind, united to a strong and fertile imagination, and a great vein of humour. You see in every thing he writes, that he is able to lay a plan and connect the parts; this distinguishes him from the whole herd of his imitators. Whenever it happens, as it sometimes does, that one part of his work does not hang well with the other, you easily discover that the defect has not arisen from ignorance,

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but because the author did not choose to give himself the trouble to weave them together. Gothe has read a great deal, is well acquainted with the best ancient and modern writers, paints, understands musick, is a good companion and wit, and — counsellor of legation to the duke.

Doubtless, he is by this time convinced of the injury he has done German literature. Several young persons, encouraged to it by his example, imagined that nothing more was requisite to become a genius, than to be bold, impudent, and careless about language and style, and to entertain contempt for every thing that is called order or regularity. They conceived that all study and attention to rule was needless, that every thing that was natural must of course be good, that a true genius required no education, but had all powers of creation in himself, and that when he became a genius, he was entitled to produce himself in his shirt, or in *puris naturalibus*, on the market-place, or in the courts of princes; that real judgment only made asses of men; and that an unrestrained imagination raised them to the rank of divinities; that dreams and enthusiastic raptures in his own greatness, and the littleness of the world about him, was the proper state of man; that all the occupations by which his daily bread was to be earned,

degraded

degraded him, and that in the best of all possible worlds he must go on all-fours and eat acorns. You must not think that I am exaggerating when I say this, for I can give you proofs of every thing I have asserted. Gothe has this in common with Rousseau; that his philosophy (whether true or false) overturns *foundations*, and gratifies dissoluteness and idleness; for which reason it has been adopted by those who have no foundation, but seek only to be happy through an implicit belief in their master. As Gothe was his own master, his excrescences were the more easily forgiven, because of their consistency with his principles and with each other, of a certain moderation he observed in them, and of his affability towards all he conversed with; but his school is the most ridiculous that can be conceived. I question whether many of these gentlemen are themselves able to give explanations of the obscure parts of their writings. The flattered nonsense was cried up by the critics of the sect, as the quintessence of human wit and human imagination. As to the understanding, as I told you above, they declared open war against that. To have a true idea of the taste of the public, one should read the productions of these gentlemen, which still pass for wonders with many. This herd of Cal-

much.

mucks gained recruits from every order of men, even out of the physical tribe, who formed systems of the same kind in their profession. They taught, that to roll in snow, to bathe in cold water, to leap like bucks about the steepest precipices, to eat nothing warm, but to live entirely on the fruits of the earth, not to give the least interruption to the operations of nature, but even to drop the excrement standing, at any time and in any place, was all that could be done by man, either for the preservation or recovery of his health.

A well-known physician, who has laid many a patient in the dust, by the pursuit of this new mode of cure, grounded all the reasonings made use of in his publications, on the example of the first wit in Germany. If he ordered a man a cold bath, and the patient expressed a fear, lest it might possibly occasion a fever, or a flux, the doctor would assure him, that he need not be afraid of any thing of the sort, for that the great Gothe went into the cold bath in frost and snow.—The young painters, too, would for some time paint nothing but storms, lightning, tops of Apennines, or Alps; elephants, lions, and tygers; Didos on the funeral-pile, Lucretias and Medeas murdering their children. All the softer landscapes, all the common animals,
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and all the ordinary situations of common life, they entirely excluded from their canvases. Truth and keeping are nothing with them; such littlenesses, they say, a genius leaves to your day-labourers for bread, and men of ordinary understandings. Art, according to their definition, consists in what is out of the common course. The more unnaturally a Dido flings her arms about, the more portentously she rolls her savage eyes, and the greater disorder there appears in her hair and drapery, the more beautiful she is. In this manner artists of all denominations misconceive Gothe's theory. His flatterers imitate him in the most ridiculous manner, in his dress, in his walk, and even in his speech.

Gothé is in some measure responsible for these excrescences. Having discovered sparks of genius in some of his friends, such as Lentz, Clinger, and others, by proper encouragements he soon blew the sparks into a real flame. Thus far was fit and right; but as soon as he had commenced protector, there came people to him by no means worthy of his protection. Instead of sending these back to their brethren of the forest, the bubble of reputation led him on, and he was not ashamed, at least for a time, to set himself at the head of a little academy—very different in this respect from Rousseau, who
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neither commended nor protected any one. At present Gothe does not seem to disturb himself much about literary pursuits. He is at work on the life of the celebrated Bernard of Weimar, and enjoys life as much as it is to be enjoyed amidst a number of little troubles. Formerly he used to be regularly besieged with recommendations, and his disciples came from all parts to visit him, in hopes to be brought forward by his patronage. He is now grown wiser, and has made it a rule to himself, to be very nice in his recommendations. In this he is extremely in the right, as he would be accountable for the follies of all these people. Neither indeed does it follow as a natural consequence, that because the minister, counsellor, and private secretary of a prince is a wit, his cooks, and butlers, *valets de chambre*, huntsmen, and stable-boys, should also be wits.

Gotha is a large town, richer and handsomer than Weimar; the number of its inhabitants is estimated at nine or ten thousand. There are some valuable manufactures in this place. The court is as popular as that of Weimar, and equally fond of strangers. Some years ago the duke had one of the best German theatres in Germany; but he sent away the whole company on finding that the expence was too large, that
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he had sufficiently amused himself, and that the players began to assume airs of importance.

The subjects of both these dukes are very happy. Their finances too are well regulated, and their administration of justice and police is perfect. Neither of them have the weakness of other German princes, who spend a great part of their incomes in the maintenance of a regiment or two of soldiers, and make the younger part of their subjects' do the military exercise, instead of keeping them at the plough. The income of each of them is about 600,000 Rhenish guilders, or 54,000 French louis-d'ors. Their country is extremely productive, and extraordinarily well inhabited.

Erfurt is a very large, old, black, and ill-inhabited town; it is near a mile in circumference, and contains nearly eighteen thousand men. The most remarkable thing here is the art of gardening, which is carried to a greater perfection than in any other part of Germany I have yet had occasion to see. The people of the country carry on a considerable trade in fruits and plants. The inhabitants, like those of the rest of Saxony, are a handsome, sensible, and friendly people. The present vice-governor for the Elector of Mentz, to whom the city, with seventy villages which lie round it, belongs,

longs, is a baron of D'Alberg, canon of Mentz, whom you may probably have seen at Paris. He was in the house of the marquis of ———, and, if I mistake not, well known to the duke of Choiseul. He is a man of uncommon knowledge of the world, a man of letters in the full extent of the word, and a patriot. He understands all the business of the higher world, and all that concerns government; possesses the Belles Lettres and the arts, and is on terms of friendship with the most sensible men of Germany. He expects in time to be the first ecclesiastical prince of the German empire, and, after the Pope, the richest and most distinguished prelate in the catholic world. Erfurt and its territory yields annually about 180,000 Rhenish guilders. It contains about thirty-six thousand men.

L E T T E R XLVI.

Leipfick.

I CANNOT quit Saxony without saying something to you of the reformation which began here.

The origin of the reformation, as a question of learning, is difficult to determine. Between the times of John Hufs and Luther, Paul of Tubingen, Brulfer, Basil of Groningen, and several English, openly professed the doctrines of the reformed. The Waldenses had spread their opinions very considerably long before the time of Hufs; and between their time and the æra of Hufs, Wicliff, John of Paris, Arnaud de Villeneuve, William of St. Amour, Evrard, bishop of Saltzburg, and many others taught the tenets of Luther and Calvin. It is certain, that from the time of the Albigeois to the breaking out of the reformation, there was no period in which some remarkable man did not openly maintain the principles of the Protestant religion. Between the time of Peter de Waldo, (who did most towards the spreading of the sect of the Albigeois, though they

they do not take their name from him, as some have thought,) and Berenger, who came not a hundred years after him, we meet with Pierre de Bruis, Henry de Thoulouse, and Arnaud Hot, who, with many others, made the doctrines held by the Protestants of the present day, known all over France. The celebrated bishop Honoré of Autun, who wrote upon free will, and, in the spirit of the Protestants of this day, called the Pope the great beast, and the Whore of Babylon, lived in 1115, and Berenger died in 1091; so that there is hardly a generation between them.

In the same century with Berenger, Arnolph, bishop of Orleans, distinguished himself at the council of Rheims, by a speech much more violent than any thing which Luther has written against the power of the Pope. In a word, the opinions of Protestants are to be met with in the earliest ages of the church; and an attentive reader of ecclesiastical history will soon see, that they are connected with the opinions of the first sectaries, and that it was not the bare novelty of his opinions which made Luther remarkable.

Whoever is a little acquainted with the history of the century before Luther, and can form to himself a precise idea of the state of Saxony,
previous

previous to the breaking out of the reformation, will easily see, that other things besides theology contributed to this event, and that Luther only gave the long waited for signal of revolt.

Since the time of the emperor Sigismund, (who would have brought about the revolution himself, if his knowledge had corresponded with his thirst for reformation, and who for want of that knowledge suffered himself to be led by the nose by some cardinals) Germany had been at work on a reformation. If a Catholic at this time was to say what was said, not only in the schools and in publications, but at the council of Constance before the whole nation, at the diet of the empire, and by particular princes in their transactions with each other, he would be put into a prison as a violent heretic. It is indeed wonderful, how the minds of the Catholic princes were changed by the heat of dispute after that step was once taken, which they themselves had before endeavoured to produce. The well known *hundred grievances* (which in the end grew to much more than a hundred) of the German nation plainly shewed, that most of the courts of Germany were ready to protect the first bold man who would revolt against the court of Rome, and

and support the political grievances with theological arguments. The cunning, active, and very eloquent Æneas Sylvius, who effected the *concordate* betwixt the Pope and the empire by his crafty manœuvres, awakened still more the jealousy of all the thinking patriots of Germany. Though he was a subtile genius, who for the moment could gain the ascendancy over the cold Germans, and make them acquiesce in silence, yet after all the declamations and fine intrigues of this Cicero of his time, the obstinacy natural to the cold character returned, and again brought forth the old complaints. Æneas Sylvius thought his enemies weaker than they really were. In all his writings you see that he imagined that he should be able to cheat the Germans; but their genius was awake, and they saw through him, though they had neither experience enough, nor union enough amongst themselves, to resist the artifices he played off against them. Mayer, chancellor of Mentz, at that time the most enlightened, most refined, and most brilliant court in Germany, and which contributed exceedingly to the success of the reformation, in his letters (to be found in several compilations of the times), speaks to the Italian in a tone that would have put to silence any advocate of the court of Rome, but the very

witty sophist Æneas Sylvius. Whoever considers the intrigues and webs which the court of Rome must have wove to keep the duke of Bavaria and the Palgrave of the Rhine in good humour (some proofs of which are to be met with in Febronius), will only wonder how the reformation came to be put off so late as to the time of Luther.

Whilst the politics of several courts of Germany were thus directed against the 'court of Rome, the reputation of the latter was daily sinking in consequence of the philosophy that gained ground in the schools, and the intercourse of learned men with each other. The progress made in printing, which became general in Germany in the last part of the fifteenth century, contributed to the general spread of knowledge. As early as in the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Germans began to write their own language with correctness. The way was prepared for the people to be soon taught. This, no doubt, was the golden age of Germany. It had warm patriots, industrious philosophers, and thinking princes. The awakened spirit of improvement had manifested itself in legislation and the improvement of the police; peace was established at home, arts and taste had begun to spread over Germany from Italy.

Bologna

Bologna was the resort of all the German nobility. It is true, indeed, that they brought home with them the barbarous mixture of the Roman, Papal, and Lombard law, but they also brought home good manners, a knowledge of the Italian and Latin languages, and a taste for the fine arts and sciences. Erasmus of Rotterdam, Reachlin, Hutten, and many others, are signal proofs how soon taste was purified in Germany. Saxony in particular had several good schools. The university of Leipfick had succeeded to the fame of that of Prague; and that of Wirtemberg, out of which Luther was soon to give the signal for battle, was frequented not only by Germans, but by Hungarians, Poles, Danes, and Swedes. Luther's other writings are evident proofs how much the German language itself was cultivated in Germany, and his translation of the bible testifies how well the ancient languages were understood in the schools. Indeed it is probable, that Germany would have been the first country enlightened by Italy, and so have arrived at the present brilliant æra of literature immediately, had not religious disputes disturbed the minds of the people, and the war of thirty years, which followed, laid waste the country.

Italy, at that time the most flourishing country

in Europe, thought of no reformation, though it probably saw the religious abuses still more clearly than the Germans themselves. The wits of Italy amused themselves with satires on the pope, cardinals, and their adherents the monks and nuns. They considered the abuses of religion with as little seriousness as men in the polite world look upon adultery and gallantry, which are now grown too universal for the police to have any hope of being able to restrain them. Indeed the excesses in which Italian priests and prelates indulged themselves, were not of that low savage kind which disgraced those of Germany, but accorded better with the polished manners, the character of the people, and social life; and the arts, which contributed all they could to the outward splendour of religion in this country, covered many defects in the eyes of thinking men, just as a coquet procures admirers by a charming patch, with which she contrives to cover a wart or ugly spot of another kind. When we add to these considerations, that the commerce with the *spiritual* colonies brought home great riches, without the least hazard or expence to the nation; that since the time of Charlemagne these colonies had spread almost to the borders of the frozen sea, and that many Italian nobles made their fortune

fortune in the church; it will be no wonder that this country took no share in the reformation, albeit it was superior to the rest of Europe in philosophy and politics, and probably saw the corruption with a quicker eye than Luther and his associates.

As to France, since the days of *Philip le Bel*, it had learned to sport with the holy spirit of Rome. The court of Rome was no longer formidable to it. Our kings had a secret understanding with the popes, and knew how to make the vicar of Christ subservient to their purposes. Our manners too were more correct than those of the Germans, and our ecclesiastics confined themselves more within the bounds of their order and of honour. As a proof of this, the council of Trent found nothing to alter in the French discipline, though it made a signal revolution in the manners of the German ecclesiastics. Though we had not indeed so many brilliant writers as the Germans had, knowledge in general was much more universally spread; and there are proofs sufficient that men saw the abuses of religion as clearly in France, as they did any where else. The behaviour of our envoys at the council of Constance one hundred years before, and the manner in which our court united with the German Protestants, as well as many other instances

instances of the kind that might be brought, are a plain proof that religion was considered in France as a subordinate thing to politics.

Many other causes besides the knowledge of the abuses in religion, must also have contributed to the breaking out of the reformation in Germany. These are very various; doubtless, one of the principal was the pride with which the court of Rome affected to treat the Germans: it had so often cheated and bullied this compliant and, till the fifteenth century, stupid people, that it began to imagine it might increase the burthen, *ad infinitum*, without any danger of meeting with resistance; but, according to the old proverb, oppression is the parent of liberty. Rome imagined that the concordate of *Aschaffenburg* had secured it against any farther attempts from the nation; but this agreement had had quite a different effect, and had made the people see that they were betrayed by the craft of the Popish mediators.

Another cause of the reform is to be sought for in the character of the nation. A phlegmatic man, when he once sees that he is betrayed and brought under the harness, is the most untractable and stubborn of men. The numberless sectaries in France, previous to the reformation, passed by like the fashions of the country, and were forgotten.

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The manners of the clergy of Germany likewise contributed to produce a change. The nunneries were open brothels; and whenever the prelates or abbots happened to be lords of manors, they exercised the right of *prælibation* over the daughters of their tenants, in the same manner as the temporal lords. Debauchery was not covered over in this country, as in Italy and Germany, by good company and good manners, but it broke out into the most brutal and disgusting excesses: for instance, a little before the breaking out of the reformation, a priest of Augsburg carried his effrontery so far, as to have knowledge of a woman in the open streets. Child murder, sodomy, and all the unnatural vices, had their full play amongst the German ecclesiastics. These horrid acts must have struck that part of the German public, who had been polished by an acquaintance with the arts and sciences of other countries, more than they would do the stupid inhabitants of a land whose priests went no farther than other people.

To all these causes there still remains to be added, the heat with which Luther carried on his attack. The Protestants themselves do not deny, that the passions of the man, his pride and vindictive spirit, contributed much to his success.

We Frenchmen know nothing at all of Luther; both our ecclesiastics and historians have equally mistaken his character. Even Voltaire, who was commonly so fortunate in delineating features which had escaped others, knew no more of Luther than, that he had called the Pope an ass. Luther's writings display not only a large quantity of knowledge, but an uncommon share of wit, and at the same time strong signs of a lively imagination. As to his wonderful humour, it is a kind of mean betwixt the manner of a well-fed monk, a true brother, and that of a sensible, learned, and patriotic professor of the present day. If we judge him by our present rules of taste, we shall find that he often falls into coarseness and vulgarity; but we must recollect, that he had to do with the populace, and that his scholars, animated by the zeal which the lust of reformation brought upon them, published many things which he did not intend should see the light. They began all their works with their prophet, and would not suffer a word of his to be lost, though spoken when he was drunk: it is thus his table conversations have come to be printed. You read in some editions of them, that when the great man perceived that some of the persons present were writing down his jokes, he said, 'Ye asses, how!

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‘ comes it that you pick up the excrement that I let fall ?’ But it was as much owing to this rough kind of wit as to his learning, that his writings spread so far as they did. Like a truly phlegmatic man, he was irreconcilable and untractable when once he had been provoked. He moved heaven and earth against the popes. From the cloysters and jovial societies, in which he had made every body merry at their expence, he hurried to the courts of princes to urge the battle, or wrote himself the most bitter invectives against them. Though he would often put himself into no very decent passions with other reformers, on account of difference of opinion, he took care always to keep the sovereigns he had to do with united ; a sure sign that he was a man of the world, who knew how to treat with the great, as well as with the small ones of the earth. Besides all this, and above all, Luther was a *good* man ; he kept an expensive house, left debts behind him, and, what does the Protestant princes in Germany of that time no great honour, his wife and children fell into almost extreme poverty.

Erasmus of Rotterdam, and others, who in the beginning adhered to Luther’s party, were undoubtedly more learned and experienced men than he was ; but a far different being from a mere learned man was required to strike the stroke.

stroke. It was necessary that the man who was to take the first step, should unite pre-eminence of learning with boldness and intrepidity, qualities which seldom fall to the share of a man of letters. He was also to be a man for the people, which is seldom the case with a man of Erasmus's character; in a word, he was to be a Luther.

Some people have been willing to deprive him of the honour of having struck the first blow, but this is very immaterial: they say that Zwingle had preached against the abuses of the church in Switzerland before the year 1507, in which Luther published his thesis; it is true, that Zwingle had done so, and so had many others in Germany, before either Zwingle or Luther. From the time of the council of Constance, there never had been wanting men to preach and write against the injustice of the court of Rome, and the freedom of their pens was a singular contrast enough with the tyranny of the church government. But sermons alone could do nothing; all the political negotiations of the most respectable courts could do nothing before Luther. To effect any thing considerable, there wanted a man to set himself at the head of a large party, under whom all the learned men of the times would enlist, whom one of the most powerful princes of the times would

would support, and who should charge from so respectable a place as the university of Wirtemberg at that time was;—this man was Luther. Circumstances, too, must have concurred, the influence of which we cannot at this time calculate. Preaching alone would have done as little in Switzerland, as it did in Germany. It was necessary to proceed to *action*, and to set *hands* to work. All the other reformations followed the example which had been set them in that of Saxony; and though other reformers afterwards broke with Luther, and some of them went farther than he had done, they all looked up to him as their chief, and as having broke the ice for them. Without him, or rather without the circumstances which impelled him, in all probability matters would never have come to action. Sensible men would have written satires, they would have made patriotic representations, and have preached; and, in the end, the Pope would have been compelled to do in Germany what he had done in France, from which last kingdom the sale of indulgencies (which was the first signal of rebellion in Germany), and the great abuses, have been banished without reformation.

It is usual for later writers to dwell much on the degree of light which the reformation has spread over the world. In my opinion, this is
treating

treating the matter in a very partial way. The fact is, that as to Germany, the illumination or the cultivation of it was put off for two hundred years by the reformation; during that period, France and Italy became very flourishing and enlightened countries, and Germany would undoubtedly have vied with them in cultivation, had not the theological disputes banished philosophy, and the country been torn up by civil war. Even Italy flourished in a degree which Germany will not yet arrive at for some time. Venice, Genoa, and Tuscany were so enlightened, so polished, and, for their size, so powerful, that, making allowances for the different magnitudes of the countries, Europe has nothing at this time to produce that can compare with them. Venice alone was able to find employment for the empire and the whole power of Germany, and raised the jealousy of all the princes of those times. Naples also was a most flourishing state. As for myself, I confess, that I cannot see what pre-eminence the Protestants have a right to claim even at this day, with regard to general illumination, over the Catholics; for instance, the French, and part of the Italians. The general enlightening of the understanding does not depend upon two or three mysteries of religion more or less in one country than in another. I, too, set out on my
journey

journey with the prejudice that the great body of Protestants must be more enlightened than the Catholics; but I was soon obliged to give it up, and found that many of our countrymen have much more knowing heads than can be found in the people of several Protestant countries I passed through. Even amongst the Protestants themselves, the knowledge of the people is in no proportion to the simplicity of their different religions. The Saxons, whose religion is by no means so simple, or, as some people would call it, so philosophical as that of some of the reformed, are, upon the whole, a much more enlightened people than the reformed Swiss and Dutchmen: the difference amongst the peasants is very striking.—In Germany, after the darkness in which war and theology had involved the country, the Catholics applied themselves much sooner than the Protestants to the sciences. Sturm, the first improver of the Protestant schools, in his treatise *De Institutione Scholarum*, allows, that the Jesuits had an advantage over the Protestants in the schools, and that these must exert themselves, if they would come up with them. It has been solely owing to the indolence and stupidity of the Catholic princes, that the Protestants have not only overtaken them, but got a great way before them.

Whilst

Whilst the latter made use of the liberty which had been procured to their schools by the change of their religion, the former suffered the papal huntsmen to entrap them under the authority of their unthinking princes; but this was not the case in France, Venice, and other Catholic countries.

It may, I think, admit of some doubt, whether the abolition of the ancient church government did much more for the happiness of the people, than it did for their understandings; at least in every Protestant country I passed through, I heard the ecclesiastics complain of the decay of their credit, the narrowness of their circumstances, and the disorders which were the consequences of them; amongst which, that they most enumerated and complained the most bitterly of, was the not having a bond of union amongst themselves, but every man's being allowed to be a pope in his own circle. No doubt but the reformers merited much by improvements they introduced into the ecclesiastical police as connected with the civil, I mean by their banishment of celibacy, fasts, Popish dispensations and indulgencies; but these improvements are consistent with the existence of the Catholic religion, and have been introduced more or less into several countries. The trade of indulgencies is ruined almost over
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the whole Catholic world. Even the Spaniards and Portuguese crusades, formerly the most productive of all, now bring in very little to the holy father. For a long time purgatory has only produced the trifling sums which monks, religious brotherhoods, and other communities, whose festivals are connected with indulgencies, pay for their bulls of foundation; and this source of revenue is now almost dried up; for in most Catholic countries there are no erections of new cloysters, nor new fraternities, nor any introduction of new festivals; on the contrary, they are endeavouring as fast as they can to abolish the old. Indeed it is only to the ecclesiastics of the Catholic countries that purgatory is at all productive; but I have seen the ecclesiastics of Protestant countries use artifices to extort money from their people, particularly the peasants, far more dangerous than purgatory, which, after all, produced only offerings freely given.

The great merit of the reformers consists in the change [which their reformation made in the morals of the people: indulgencies, processions, festivals, fasts, and the like, might have been cut off by the civil power, without its having made any separation in the church; but no civil power can at once render a debauched, dissipated

people industrious and frugal. Luther, who was not the best œconomist himself, preached nothing up so much as abstinence, frugality, and industry. The Calvinists went still farther; they taught that the world was a place of torment, and that the true life of man consisted in the mortification of the flesh. Their catechism forbade all enjoyments, and made a sin of laughter. A man must read Swift's writings to see how much farther the Calvinists went in this point than the Lutherans. It must be owned, at the same time, that this command of abstinence is the cause why the Calvinists are every where richer than the Lutherans; for they are neither more active nor more industrious than these, but, on the contrary, their melancholy humour, (a consequence of their education and their manners) which amongst the common people, in many countries, almost borders on stupidity, renders them heavy at every thing; indeed this is the reason that they have not done so much in the arts as either the Lutherans or the Catholics. I remember to have read in an English Review, an estimate of the proportion between the artists and ingenious men produced by the Puritans or Calvinists, and those of the established church; according to this account, the former stood to the latter as one to six, and yet the dissenters make two fifths of the

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the inhabitants of England.—The Dutchman lives more carkingly in the midst of his money, than the Catholics and Lutherans of middling incomes in other places; he knows no pleasure in the whole world, except that of sitting over his dish of tea in winter, to converse about war or peace, and in summer visiting his garden once a week; he is tedious, and in a certain degree torpid about his business, and it is to his indefatigable attention to the main chance, but still more to his niggardliness, that he is indebted for his riches. This is the character of the Calvinist every where; and the spirit, which is a consequence of this melancholy humour, allows some of them frauds in the daily trade and intercourse of life, which a Catholic or Lutheran would consider as manifest cheating. They have a text of scripture ready for all occasions, but give the preference to this, *be ye wise as serpents*.—The Memnonites and Quakers are still more niggardly than the Calvinists, and in consequence much richer, but likewise still duller; these, as far as I can perceive, have no genius whatever for the arts.

It was natural enough to expect, that the reformation should here and there lead to absurdities, and that men would go from one extreme to the other; but as only a part of the Protest-

ants have carried these tenets to this excess, they are as profitable to the whole state, as they are probably pernicious to the happiness of the individual. Though the immense riches of the Dutch contribute little to render them happier than poorer people, they enable them, not only to support the greatest wars for themselves, but to furnish friends and foes with considerable sums.

As for the Lutherans, they possess part of the humour of their founder, and to a high degree of industry and frugality unite a great love of pleasure and jollity, which makes the enjoyment of society. The unnatural hatred to pleasure does not damp their wit and good humour, and they have nothing of the savage slovenliness, the dark hypocrisy, and the ill breeding, which distinguishes the majority of other sects.

By these regulations in the manners, we see how powerful religion is on the hearts of men. Prior to this miracle, for it really was one, Germany was in a constant frenzy; drinking, dancing, and intriguing, kept priests and laity in a perpetual dream, and senseless spectacles of every kind contributed their share to the perversion of the understanding; when lo! in an instant, the people ran from the alehouses and brothels to church,
opened

opened their eyes, believed, and became industrious, frugal, and active.

To bring about such a change as this was, required a degree of resolution, which is only to be met with among a barbarous people; such as the Germans of that time were. When pleasure has once enervated a nation, nothing of the kind is more to be expected. In the southern parts of Germany, particularly in Bavaria, the object would be as difficult to compass as it is desirable.

L E T T E R XLVII.

Berlin.

MY way hither lay through Wittemberg, a good looking town, but which still preserves the marks of the frequent change of masters it underwent in the last Silesian war, and which it has not yet entirely recovered. It should be properly the capital of the electorate, but must yield the first place to Leipfick. Indeed, in point of riches and population, it is inferior to many other towns in Saxony.

As far as the Elbe, the country is as well cultivated as Upper Saxony, and seems to have the same soil; but you are hardly got a post beyond Wittemberg, before you discover a great alteration; instead of the rich black soil of Saxony, you meet with nothing but sand; there is also a tedious uniformity in the prospect: there are large morasses near the rivers, and the number of thick black woods give the whole an unpleasing appearance. Of all the German provinces I have hitherto passed through, nature seems to have treated Brandenburg the most like a step-mother.

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The inhabitants endeavour to remedy the niggardliness of nature by their industry. Wherever the soil has allowed of any kind of agriculture, they have made the best of it. The appearance of the villages and farms, as well as of their inhabitants, bespeaks prosperity.

My own experience confirms what several other travellers have observed before me. The custom-house officers in Prussia are neither so tedious, nor so distressing and vexatious to a traveller, as those of Austria; they are for the most part intelligible, sensible men, and by no means so despotic and boorish as the Austrian gentlemen of the same profession.

Berlin is a remarkably beautiful and magnificent city, and may certainly be looked upon as one of the finest in Europe. It has nothing of the uniformity, which in the long run makes the appearance of most of the new and regular built towns tiresome. The architecture, the distribution of the buildings, the appearance of the squares, the plantations of trees both in these and the streets; every thing, in a word, bespeaks taste and variety.

I have been for some days reconnoitring the town according to my common custom. Berlin is not so large as either Paris or Vienna; it is about four miles and a half long from the *Muh-*

lenthor, which is south-east, to the *Oranienburgerthor* north-west, and about three miles broad from the *Bernauerthor* to the north-east, to the *Potsdamerthor* to the south-west; but within this extensive enclosure there are many gardens, and in some parts even fields taken in: there are not more than six thousand houses in this town, whereas in Paris there are near thirty thousand. The emptiness of many places is a singular contrast to the magnificence of the buildings.

Nor is the contrast of this magnificence with the circumstances of the people less striking. Sometimes while you are standing gazing at the beauty of a building in the Ionic style, finely stuccoed, with a magnificent front, and all the outward appearance of the habitation of a farmer general, or at least a duke; on a sudden a window opens in the lower story, and a cobbler brings out a pair of boots and hangs them under your nose, in order to dry the leather. As you are lost in wonder at this phenomenon, the second story opens, and a breeches-maker treats you with a pair of new washed breeches; a little while after another window opens in the same story, and a taylor hangs out a waistcoat before you, or some woman empties a dish of *potatce* parings on your head: well, you go on a few steps farther, and

come to a palace of the Corinthian order, which looks like a house belonging to a mistress of the king, or of one of the princes of the blood. Scarce have your wandering eyes reached the top, but you are saluted by a Jew from the attic story, who asks you whether you have any thing to swap; you cast your eyes a story lower, and behold shirts hanging out to dry, which belong to an officer who is shaving himself, and whom you would hardly conceive to have two shirts belonging to him. You march on through two or three streets of the same kind, and in all of them see inhabitants of the same sort; at last you arrive at the house of a general officer, as you easily discover by the guard before the door; but you see neither porter, nor running footmen, nor any thing of the train of attendants of the nobility at Vienna.

I have now been three days in the house of a privy-counsellor, and am fortunate enough to have a lord of the war-office for my fellow-tenant. It was impossible for me to remain at the inn. The host made bows upon bows, and was so very civil, that I had my suspicions of him the very first moment; nor was I mistaken, for upon my staying dinner the next day at a gentleman's house, for whom I had letters of recommendation from Dresden, at my return he

made his remarks upon it; and the day after took it in serious dudgeon, that I would not leave a fine garden and good company, I had strolled to, and walk three miles home to add another item to his reckoning. We were, however, reconciled; but as he perceived I was one of those who do not hold long conversations with inn-keepers, he came into my room, and would read me the Berlin newspapers, which for lies and nonsense are not behind hand with the French ones. As he was going on with the weighty and important intelligence, that a Prussian general had died of the gout; that his royal highness Prince Henry was gone a journey to Rhinsberg; that a person in the *Newmark*, who was a man of letters, was afflicted with the cholic; and that the wife of a general officer in Silesia was safely delivered of a daughter, I snatched the paper out of his hands. He took this affront so civilly, that I was on the point of forgiving the insolence of the night before, when he gave me to understand, that he could provide me with a companion to sleep with, as well as with my board, if I chose it; upon this I immediately went out to look for a private house, it being a maxim with me, that every inn-keeper who is a bawd, is of course a cheat. In general, the inn-keepers of this place seem to be a peculiar kind of people;

people; they are all outrageously civil at first, but extremely furly when they meet with any one who does not chòose to be imposed on by them; there is likewise no end of their impertinent questions, and when they have no girls in the house, they make it no secret, that this is an article which they undertake to provide strangers with. They have lists in which the ladies of the neighbourhood are sorted according to their prices, and a servant is always ready to fetch the wares which the stranger bargains for. My landlord, the privy counsellor, assured me, that there was hardly one landlord in twenty who did not deal in this trade.

A traveller who comes out of Bohemia into Saxony, is apt to be struck with the dearness of provisions in the latter, but it is nothing to what he meets with when he comes from Saxony hither. Several causes contribute to this, among which may be enumerated the natural poverty of the country in several commodities, the high customs, and many monopolies. To give you a small idea of the latter, the measure of wood, which you know costs a trifle at Paris, here comes to a guinea and a half, notwithstanding that Brandenburg is full of woods of all sorts. Indeed the small quantity of money in circulation, and the

the price of every necessary of life, forms a strong contrast betwixt this place and Vienna. At Vienna you are amazed that, with such a circulation of money, every thing can be so cheap, and here can hardly conceive how, with so small a proportion of cash, every thing can be so dear. Conceive that you pay six or seven livres here for a bottle of Burgundy which has nothing but the name of Burgundy; our common wines of Orleanois, Isle de France, Guyenne, &c. sell for three or four livres a bottle. Indeed, the king is a little too hard upon the drinkers of wine.

In all the private houses I have hitherto seen, there prevails a rigid œconomy in the kitchen, cellar, and indeed in every part: the only article of expence is dress; but you see that the belly has been pinched for the sake of powder and ruffles. The ladies dress in the fashion, and I saw some ornaments in very great taste, and very rich.

There is no town in Europe, except Constantinople, which has so numerous a garrison as Berlin has: it consists of twenty-six thousand men. For a little money you may have every thing done for you by a soldier; they clean your shoes, wash, mend, pimp, and, in short, do all that is done elsewhere by Savoyards and old women. They are also in the custom of
begging

begging of strangers, not absolutely charity, but something to drink, with which, however, they commonly purchase something to eat, as the Sprey has water enough to quench their thirst. They are not so surly as the Imperial troops, and you meet with several sensible men amongst them.

As far as I can hitherto see of the people of this place, they are better provided, as to the upper region or head, than the inhabitants of Vienna, but cannot vie with them in the middle regions, the belly, and the pockets. The vacuum in those, particularly the purse, may easily be discovered by an attentive observer, and it strikes a stranger forcibly. They have indeed so little respect for the eyes and ears of the public, that officers and counsellors will drive a bargain for guilders with Jews in a public coffee-house, a thing I saw with my own eyes the day after I arrived here. The merchants, manufacturers, and that part of the nobility which have places, deal so mysteriously in all matters of money, that you find it very difficult to distinguish them from those who have not any. On the other hand, you observe here such an information with regard to the state of the country, such a freedom in discoursing on the measures of government, such a national pride, such

such a participation in every public occurrence; and in the military and civil officers, such an activity for the state, and (notwithstanding their small salaries) such a jealousy of doing their duty, that in all these respects you would think yourself in London. This is an evident sign, that the spirit of a people does not depend upon the form, but on the administration of a government, and that patriotism is not the exclusive privilege of republics. They talk here about the king's regulations, as well as about his *emissions* and *commissions*, with a degree of freedom, that you would only expect to find in an Englishman.

Though I have been here but a short time, I think I can take upon me to contradict an opinion, which has pretty generally gone abroad, upon the authority of some gentlemen who have travelled post through the country, about the *mysteriousness* of this government. It is said, that there is a cloud round the king's operations, and that all is supported by his power; for my own part, I have not seen a more open or more popular government than this is, that of England itself not excepted. The whole plan of administration appears to me so plain, and at all times so open to every man's inspection, that I cannot conceive how so false an estimate

can have been made. Some Englishmen, who think that the essence of liberty consists in babbling, and giving vent in parliament to every species of ill-humour; and, who from their impudence and self-sufficiency, are the worst observers that travel, have most probably spread this opinion. It is not, however, necessary to be long in the country to discover that the king is no fonder of clandestine measures than he is of his power. The department of foreign affairs, and possibly some things which relate to the discipline of the army, are the only things which are kept in some obscurity; and surely no man will expect, that the king will suffer his correspondence with his ministers, and the secret of his treaties, to be printed and sold in the shops: but I will talk to you more at length about this another time.

L E T T E R XLVIII.

Berlins

FORGIVE me, brother, for having made you wait some time for a letter, but I have made several excursions through the country, and will now sit down to give you an account of my peregrinations.

I was three days at Potsdam. This city has still finer houses in it than those at Berlin ; but, like these, they are inhabited only by persons of the lower and middling ranks. The situation of the town was much extolled to me, and for a country with so much sameness in it as Brandenburg has, it may pass for a fine one : Neither, however, the buildings nor the situation were the chief objects of my visit here ; what I came for was to see the king, who has for so many years been the god of the Parisian idolatry, the wonder of all Europe, the master and terror of his foes, and, in short, who throughout all the neighbouring states is called The King *par excellence*. I was told that I might very easily be presented to him, but I have always thought it a great piece of impertinence to think so lightly of

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of the leisure of a mighty monarch; as to introduce yourself to him without the smallest pretension. I had the good fortune to see him twice on horseback on the parade, where, however, he is not so regular an attendant as formerly.

All the prints I have hitherto seen of him are only half lengths; but there are many copies of a very good picture, in which he is drawn at full length. You may see one of these at Madam S—'s, at Paris, and they are so common here, that you meet with them in several inns. The original was painted by an Italian, who having been extremely fortunate in hitting off the likeness, the king suffered copies of the picture to be taken by many good masters here, and made presents of them to several German princes, and thus the copies have become common. Heavily as the hand of age now seems to lye on this immortal man, the very strong likeness of the face still remains. The king of Prussia is hardly of the middling size, but strong built and thick set. His body is now much bent, and his head shakes, but his eyes are still piercing, and roll about when he is observing. Peace, order, resolution, and earnestness are marked upon his face. There is likewise that particular look about him, which is common to all great personages,

sonages, and which I should call indifference to all that furrounds him, were it not that you see evidently, that he takes an uncommon interest in the things which he conceives specially to belong to his province. The editor of *Voyages en differents Pays de l'Europe*, Mr. Pilati, says, that every thing at Berlin and Potsdam is carried on in silence, and that nothing can be known either of the king's private life, or of his public affairs. There is an universal opinion of the kind gone out about this court : If you will believe some Englishmen, especially Mr. Wraxall, the genius which animates the Prussian monarchy, is a man-hating, light-shunning genius, who in imperceptible darkness strikes constantly at the estates of the subjects and lays snares for them. It is impossible to form a false judgment of the king. Mr. Pilati, who contradicts himself in more places than one, says in another part of his letters, that the king's hours are so regularly distributed, that at any time you may know what he is then doing. Indeed the true cause why so little is to be said of the king's private life, is the great simplicity and regularity of it. Here is no minister to enter into intrigues with, to ruin a man of honour who stands in his way ; no mistress whose humour a man must study to get the favourable minute to obtain a right, or
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have justice done him for an injury, or of whose adventures he must keep a register, to revenge himself on her by bon-mots, epigrams, and anecdotes;—no queen to puzzle and perplex the court every morning with the very great problem, whether she has slept with her husband or not, whether she is breeding or not, and whether the fashion will not undergo some revolution, commanded by her Majesty, in the course of the ensuing week. The princes and princesses of the blood have neither disputes for precedency to fettle, nor cabals to contrive, nor large play debts to discharge, nor any of the mighty businesses which are the daily occupations of other courts to dispatch; the king neither hunts nor goes to balls or theatres (a few operas only excepted); he has no occasion to advise with a minister of finance, how, or from what funds the mistress's new dress, or her new house, or her new garden, or her journey to—shall be paid;—nothing is undertaken here for which the money is not ready. The king of Prussia has neither favourite, nor confessor, nor court fool (who, *mutatis mutandis*, is still in good credit in the other courts of Germany, and whose part the confessor mostly plays).

Under these circumstances the court anecdotes of the day must necessarily be very few;

but yet the king gives himself so little trouble to be concealed, that as the Englishman, Moore, observes, it is no difficult matter to arrive at his bed-chamber unperceived: he is surrounded neither by a guard or a swarm of footmen and *valets de chambre*; he often walks alone in the gardens of Sans-Soucy, and wherever he is, except at a review, no man is kept at a distance.

It is owing to the same simplicity and order which obtains in his private life, that the operations of the king of Prussia's government make so little noise. Whoever considers his administration as mysterious, or his dealings as established in intrigue, falls into the error so common to all us mortals, of thinking there is intrigue wherever there is simplicity; hence it is, that we do not see the truth that is under our noses. Sometimes, however, a man's over zeal works out somewhat bitter from his own gall, and this I conceive to have been Mr. Wraxall's case.

It is true, that the king neither holds stated councils, nor yet a *Lit de Justice*; he has no parliament whose members are promoted for their flatteries, and banished for their opposition. The princes of the blood have no opportunity of compelling him by *representations* or *protestations*

tions against his measures, either to forbid them appearing at court on certain days, or to pay their debts; men of honour are not banished from him by *Lettres de Cachet*, nor can the ministers cabal against them; neither is this king compelled to appeal to the love and patriotism of his subjects, as often as the invention of the minister of finance is exhausted, and the poor man has no artifice, save flattery, left to wring the last penny from their purses; he knows nothing of state lotteries, nor of annuities, nor of loans, nor of new *vingtiemes*, nor of augmenting the capitation; he has no *dons gratuits* to expect from his clergy, nor is he obliged to threaten them with reformation in religion, if they will not make him the presents required; he has no bishops nor *forbonne*, who imprison sensible men, and take away their character in the public estimation, in order to preserve their own places: his ministers can neither make parties amongst themselves, nor play at *the blind cow* with him.—All this must in truth render the government very uniform, and affords very little subject for news.

I spent many days in considering in what part of this administration it would be possible to introduce mystery, without being able to make a probable conjecture. There is, indeed, a

mystery incidental to foreign affairs, from the very nature of them, which even the English ministry contrive religiously to conceal from the eyes of parliament; but as to home occasions, neither the religion, the nobility, nor any part of the state is ever at variance with the whole. Far from endeavouring to undermine the rights of the nobility, the king takes all possible pains to maintain them in the full possession of them. He has assisted the Silesian nobility, who are the most powerful in his country, by lending them large sums of money, at one and a half per cent. The same thing has been done for the nobility of other countries who have wanted his assistance. No community, city, or religious order, is in the least danger of having their privileges intruded upon, as long as they are not detrimental to the advantage of the whole. The rich cloysters in Silesia and the Western Prussia, have not the least thing to apprehend.

The Prussian government is generally considered in other countries as the most despotic that exists, though, in fact, nothing can be less so. The maxim which is the foundation of the British constitution, *Lex in regno suo superiores habet Deum et Regem*, is no where so well observed as it is here. People will not surely call a rigid observation of the laws which promote the
good

good of the state despotism; and what instances are there of the king's ever having allowed himself any thing that bespoke arbitrary sentiments? In no country are the rights of reason, the rights of nature, the customs, and particular statutes which do not militate against the happiness of the whole, better observed and guarded, than they are in the Prussian dominions. No where does government direct all its steps so exactly according to the rule of right as it does here. The strongest proof that can be given of this assertion, is the consideration of the administration of finances. Taxes are the only mark of universal despotism, all other acts of power affecting only particular persons, and chiefly those who for their own interest subject themselves to them; but taxes are levied equally upon all the people. Let us therefore see how it is with taxes in the Prussian dominions.

Exclusive of the crown lands, mines, manufactures, and other revenues of royalty, the finance system of the king of Prussia rests upon the two plainest grounds that can be, the taxes and customs. The taxes fall upon the most numerous and most useful class of the people, to wit, the farmers and holders of land; and they are as moderate when compared with the value of things, as those of any other country in Europe.

rope. The farmers in the Prussian dominions, as the Englishman Moore himself acknowledges, are as well off as those of any other country whatever: they compose at least three-fourths of the king's subjects; and the good circumstances of so large a part of the nation, is a good compensation in the eyes of humanity for the nobility not being so rich as in England and France. In both these countries the farmers, though they constitute what is properly called the nation, or people, are the last thought of by the government.

It is worth while to compare the state of the English farmers with that of the Prussian ones; as it is by such comparisons alone that we can form to ourselves distinct notions of liberty and despotism, as well as of the little dependance that is to be placed on the accounts of things given by English travellers, who are wont to treat as slaves all nations who have no nabobs, nor lords, nor corrupt brawlers in parliament, nor yet a king whom every rascal is at liberty to throw dirt at under the mask of patriotisin.

The substantial English farmers cannot be taken into our comparison, on account of the smallness of their numbers; for, according to the accounts the English writers themselves
give,

give, they hardly make the sixtieth part of the whole, and are exactly what the possessors of small estates and the farmers of the crown lands are here; or rather the number of these is much greater in Prussia than that of the substantial farmers in England.

The number of yeomen, freeholders, and copy-holders, who have the right of chusing members of parliament, is also very small, and it is well known that their right of election is a vain title. The nobility, whose tenants they are in great measure, or who can bring them under their dominion various ways, rob them of their votes either by open power or secret bribery.

In the present state of things in England, the farmer has evidently no share in the legislation; he is in the strongest sense of the word, a slave of a superior order. He is compelled to go as a soldier or sailor to America, or the East or West Indies, and the highest and less numerous class of the people enjoy the fruits of his labours. The quantity of gold which he brings back to England, at the expence of his blood, raises the price of things, so that he is not able to export the produce of his lands; and a part of the best land in Europe must have remained uncultivated, had not parliament granted such large bounties on exportation, as enabled the holders of it to support

the competition of other nations: nor can even this precarious state of the corn trade last longer than till such times as the navy of Russia and the other states, which border on Poland, shall improve. As soon as Russia and Prussia shall have a sufficient navy, and the agriculture of Poland is become what it is capable of being brought to, the English corn trade will of course be destroyed. That system of convenience, which Great Britain has taken up for so many years past in defiance of justice and the law of nations, is as oppressive to the farmer, as it is advantageous to the nobility and trading part of the country. It is the former who must fight out the wars which this system introduces; they are principally affected by the stagnation and fall of national credit, the immense debt of the country, and the exchange of coin for paper-money. The increase of taxes, in the case of a war, all fall ultimately upon them, as this event at once takes a great number of hands from the plough, and the internal consumption is lessened by the absence of so many thousand men from their native country. The dangers of the sea, and the political state in which Great Britain has been for these fourscore years past, almost confine their corn trade to the countries from which the largest quantities are exported

ported in time of peace. A long war necessarily occasions a great increase of street robbers and thieves, who are all of the class of farmers, and are a new plague to the country-people. The wars England has been engaged in during the last century, which taken altogether occupy half that period, have diminished the population, to the great detriment of agriculture. Whatever is said of the population of England, it does not bear any proportion to those of France, Italy, and Germany, the size of the respective countries being taken into the account. In these countries there are two thousand five hundred men to every square mile, and in England hardly one thousand nine hundred; and yet it has a greater proportion of the necessaries of life than any country.

Blinded by a false appearance of freedom, the English farmer thinks that he is fighting for the good of his country, whilst in fact he is fighting to support the vices of the great. This is the true cause why some English writers have thought, that instructing farmers prejudiced the state, and have contended for keeping them in a state of savage barbarity, as a thing essential to the happiness of the whole. The true meaning of this is, that the nation would have soldiers and sailors to fight through storms and batteries

batteries for a freedom which hardly a twentieth part of the nation possesses.

Dr. Moore thinks that the king of Prussia's reason for contributing so much to the prosperity of his farmers is, that they may supply him with soldiers. None but an Englishman, who is used to distort every thing to the opinion which best suits his prejudices, could have had such an idea. Hardly two-fifths of the Prussian army consist of farmers sons; above half are foreigners, and the other half is made up equally from town and country. Pilati flatly contradicts Moore in this particular. He informs us, that the Prussian armies are made up of men which ancient Rome would not have accepted of for her defenders, to wit, manufacturers. I shall not take up your time nor my own in writing down any more of these conceits, which only make a sensible man laugh. The king of Prussia, as the reason of things directs, and far differently from the English legislature, considers the peasants as the most useful members of the community. He does not trouble himself with foreign colonies, which deprive the land of the hands necessary to till it, and which the peasant is obliged to defend for the advantage of the dissipated part of the nation. His system of politics rests neither on
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being master of the sea, nor on the vanity of interfering in all the concerns of the European powers, for the sake of having the doubtful name of the maintainer of the balance and freedom of Europe, which has embroiled the English in so many wars, whatever may have been falsely said to the contrary. His peasants, as I will shew you in a future letter, are in no danger of being the victims of ambition, as those of England constantly are. It is impossible for the Prussians ever to be put to the difficulty of not being able to part with what their land produces. In England, according to the account of the best politicians, large tracts of the best land is uncultivated. In Prussia, even the dry sands are ploughed. In England a man of fortune has it in his power to put a forced price upon the corn in the market to his own profit, and to the great detriment of the neighbouring farmers. Here the country is not only free from all such acts of power of the nobility, but the king, by wise regulations and by magazines, contrives to keep the corn at a constant high price: this he effects by wise regulations, and laying out large sums to keep his granaries always full. The bounty granted by the English parliament for the exportation of corn, bears no proportion to the sums spent by the king of Prussia

Prussia on the improvement of agriculture. He not only gives those who are inclined to improve the waste lands, wood for building, cattle, and stock of all kinds, but lays out large sums of money amongst the poor farmers. For several years past he has given the inhabitants of the *Middlemark* alone 10,000 thalers a year, and, according to a computation made, he gives every year about 700,000 guilders, i. e. 2,500,000 French livres amongst the poor farmers. The yearly outgoings for colonies, causeways, canals, &c. all which have the advancement of agriculture in view, cost him no less. The great advantage which the Prussian farmer has over the English, that which renders him, without a doubt, the freest and happiest farmer upon earth, is, that his land-tax is never increased; this circumstance alone would be sufficient to silence all the clamours raised about Prussian despotism, were the persons who raise them capable of any shame, or did they take any trouble to see more of the country than it is possible they should see by riding post through it.

The taxes in the king of Prussia's dominions are subject to no alteration. In the very pressure of the Silesian war, when all Europe thought that the Prussian country must be drained to the uttermost farthing, they were not raised a sixpence;

pence; and had the war been longer and still more violent, they would not have been raised. This is due to the perfect knowledge which the king has of the state of the country, and his aversion to despotism and arbitrary power. He knew that taxes are doubly distressing to the farmers amidst the desolations and distresses of war, and that any increase of them must be extremely pernicious, at a time when from the absence of the troops the consumption of the produce is lessened, the country plundered by incursions of the enemy, and many useful hands taken from the plough.

Mr. Pilati, who does justice to the king's attention to the improvement of agriculture, concludes what he says on this subject with this remark: Notwithstanding all that the king has done to promote it, agriculture will not flourish in the Prussian dominions, on account of the smallness of the circulation. I could observe no distress arising from any circumstance of this kind; on the contrary, what I saw of the dress, the furniture of their houses, and the way of life, bespoke a degree of ease, which approached very nearly to luxury; indeed, it appears *a priori*, that the inhabitants of the country cannot be exposed to that want of money which is felt in the great towns; they are the great
canals,

canals, or, if I may be allowed the expression, the great *reservoirs* of the gold, which comes to them through the small canals of the state, and returns from them through small canals to the body. The whole machine of government is calculated for their benefit: they feel the excise and monopolies less than any persons, and may free themselves entirely from their burthens, if, according to the king's paternal requisition, they will abstain from luxury. It is the manufacturers, artists, petty tradesmen, and above all, the lower and middling inhabitants of the great cities, who are compelled to consume the productions of the country, and the farmer has all the benefit of it; indeed, the whole Prussian system of customs is adapted for the peculiar advantage of the latter; for instance, the object in the extravagant duties on foreign wines, is to compel the people to drink the beer of the country, in the making of which the farmer employs his barley and his hops. The soldier gives every thing to the farmer; his clothing, his eating, his drinking, all contribute to the prosperity of the inhabitant of the country. An evident reason why the Prussian farmers must be the very people who can know no want of money, is, that the productions of the country are
much

much dearer than they are in any of the neighbouring countries, though the sale is much greater.

I have read in a German review the account of a work, the author of which attempts to prove, that the advantages enjoyed by the Prussian farmers over the other orders of the state, will some time or other prove dangerous to the constitution; but is it not natural, is it not republican, is it not consonant to the dignity of man to conceive, that the most useful, and most numerous part of a community should have the greatest authority in it? Shall a parcel of lords possess all the advantages of that freedom which the farmer is obliged to give his blood to defend?

Mr. Pilati, who often contradicts what he has proved, and often proves what he has contradicted, makes a remark in his account of Sicily, which, though it does not agree with what he himself had said before of the state of agriculture in Prussia, does great honour to the Prussian administration. After having contrasted the profuse blessings of nature in this island, with her stepmother treatment of the countries under the Prussian dominions, he tells us, that notwithstanding this, the Prussian farmers are happier than those of Sicily. What a god-like administration must that be, which
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makes the inhabitants of a sandy waste happier than the possessors of a country, which both ancient and modern writers extol as a miracle of fruitfulness and wealth! The land in Sicily produces a hundred fold, and in Prussia it is a miracle when the Mays yields seven or eight times, and the corn twelve or fifteen times, what has been sown. The Sicilians, besides the corn trade, have oil, silk, wine, citrons, oranges, sugar, and several other most valuable articles. The Prussians have only a few turneps, crab-apples, and nuts; and yet the latter are richer than the former: and is it not far more honourable to the administration of Prussia, that notwithstanding the niggardliness of nature, the greatest part of the inhabitants are happier, than if it possessed a dozen lords Clive, Cavendish, and Baltimore, and three score dukes Pignatelli, Monteleone, and Matalone? If one considers, as it is just to do, the very unfavourable soil that was to be worked upon, it will appear that the king has done wonders in agriculture. I saw several tracts of cultivated land, which fourteen or fifteen years ago were barren sands. The number of villages and houses in his several dominions, which he has either made, or so improved, that they are not to be known again, amounts to several hundreds.

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As the morasses contain some of the best land here, he spends immense sums in drying them; upon the whole, you see that agriculture here, is what nature prescribes it shall be, the groundwork of every political operation of the country.—The ministers and privy-counsellors dedicate to the improvement of it those private hours, which in other countries they give to pleasure, play, or caballing for each others places. The prime-minister *Hertberg*, who, in every sense of the word, is one of the greatest men of the present century, has an estate some miles from hence, in the improvement of which he spends his hours of relaxation from the cares of state. In almost every village you meet with a nobleman, whose principal occupation is agriculture, and who possesses the art of making his amusement and business coincide. In order to find out to what produce the soil of Prussia is best adapted, they not only import seeds from Poland, Russia, England, Sicily, and the other countries of Europe, but have made several fine experiments with corn from Barbary and Egypt. The most brilliant æra of the king's government, in his own eyes, is that which is distinguished by some useful improvement in agriculture. I was told an anecdote which does him more honour than the emperor

of China derives from opening the ground with a golden plough. There is a privy-counsellor here of the name of Brenkenhoff, a man who, born without a penny, had made himself worth millions by his industry. This gentleman, some years since, distinguished himself by his improvements in agriculture. Amongst other things, he sent for rye from Archangel, which succeeded so well, that by degrees they begged his seeds all through Pomerania, Silesia, Brandenburg, and Prussia; and the country gained considerable sums, which before used to be paid to the Poles and Russians for this commodity. In consequence of this, whenever Mr. Brenkenhoff has any thing to ask of the king for himself or the province, he always couches his request in the following manner: ‘ Had not I brought rye from Archangel, your majesty and your subjects would have been without so many thousands you now possess; it is therefore fit and proper that you likewise grant me my request.’ The king not only makes it a rule never to deny him any thing he asks, but has often said, ‘ Brenkenhoff is the most extraordinary man born in this country under my administration, and I am proud of him.’ Mr. Brenkenhoff has imported large quantities of camels and buffaloes from Asia, for the im-

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provement

provement of agriculture. The race of the latter thrive very well under the Prussian sky. I have likewise seen some of them at Saltzburg, where, notwithstanding the southern situation, the climate is not warmer than it is in Prussia; but the laziness of this animal renders all his other advantages of no account. The experiment with camels was attended with no success. The rearing of sheep, and cultivation of tobacco are, after the corn trade, the great resources of this country. They also make a large quantity of coarse silk, but this is rather the entertainment of speculative farmers, than a regular produce of the country. The nobility, clergy, and possessors of great estates, are the only ones who attend to it. It is, however, very remarkable, that there are twelve thousand pounds of silk wove every year in Prussia; whilst Hungary, whose climate is undoubtedly as favourable to this produce as any country in Europe, cannot raise above seven or eight thousand pounds worth, notwithstanding all the pains taken by government for the improvement of this branch of commerce.—Once again, brother, I must repeat it, the Prussian land-holders, who are secured against every arbitrary imposition, and in every possible way supported and protected, are a greater symptom of na-

tional liberty, than a dozen fat lords, or a corrupt parliament. In my next letter I will speak to you of the people who really feel the pressure of excise and monopolies, and amongst whom there is of course extreme poverty.

I cannot send away this letter without observing, that the very way in which the king exercises the functions of his government, is a plain proof of his not having any secret or mysterious views with respect to any of his subjects. A despot, who is not to be confined by any regard to rectitude and justice, who is always distinguishing betwixt his own advantage and the utility of the whole, and who wants to cheat his people without their observing it, must have either fools for his ministers, whom he may cheat as he does the people, or he must have a favourite, whom he can make use of for his mysterious purposes. Neither of these is the case with the king of Prussia. His ministers and counsellors are all of them the most enlightened patriots; and many of them would make a figure as men of letters, if they had time, or would give themselves the trouble of writing. With regard to a favourite, the very name is unknown in this country. Voltaire, the Marquis D'Argens, Algarotti, Quintus Icilius, and Bastiani, were only the companions of idle hours, and knew less of the government

vernment than any body, as Voltaire has often proved by his *bon mots*. These *beaux esprits* were obliged to keep within their proper sphere, and never could bring the king to be familiar with them, how little soever he made them feel the difference of rank in the ordinary affairs of life.

The king possesses the rare and great talent of letting himself down to every man, without forgetting himself in the least. His reader and secretary dare not bring him either complaint or petition. The king appears to be exceedingly mistrustful of himself, and to fear lest his daily conversation and familiarity with all sorts of people should lead him into error. His secretary, who passes so many hours of every day with him in private, must lay all the business to be done before him in form. His ministers are the only persons he refers to; they are the executors of his will.

It has been frequently observed, that no king upon the face of the earth is so well served as the king of Prussia, though there is none who pays his servants so ill. But these good servants are not to be procured by mere severity; they must have observed, that the king far excels them in understanding, and that he himself strictly adheres to the rules of justice and equity, which

he lays down for the conduct of others. Had they discovered a weak side, either in the head or heart of the monarch, there would have been an end of their good services. It is only to his extreme impartiality, his justice, and his superior understanding, that we must ascribe the activity and order in the Prussian courts of justice. No prince of the blood has the slightest advantage over a farmer in a law-suit. When a dispute happens with a subject upon any part of the domain or crown lands, there is no judge who dares have a leaning towards the king's side; on the contrary, in this case they are ordered to have a leaning against him. The same aversion to despotism leads him to make it no secret, that he does not think the kings of the earth placed here as gods of it, and vicegerents of the Almighty. He looks upon the royal dignity as a station, which, like that of a general, and many others, has been established through human dispositions, and to which, in consequence of these dispositions, birth alone gives a title. He makes as little use of religion as he does of politics, to blind his people, or keep up his authority by faith and opinion. The consciousness that he is capable of no injustice or act of power, can alone set him above this Machiavelian policy. To conclude my
thesis,

thesis, that the king is nothing less than a despot, I must observe, that he has no over-bearing passion; fame is by no means his pursuit; he despises all the applause of men from his heart. The great physiognomist, Lavater, must have observed in his countenance, that he despises man himself; at least I think I can affirm, with a degree of sufficient confidence, that the king appears less, in no man's eyes than he does in his own. Flatterers have very little to expect from him; and those who have written against him with the greatest bitterness, may be assured that he has no gall against them. The Abbé Raynal, who is at present here, is a sure proof of this. There is no place in the world in which there is less noise made about the king's actions than there is at Berlin. None of the newspapers of the country say a word about them; and there would not have been a word said about them at all, if some patriots of other countries had not taken it into their heads, of late, to blow the trumpet of fame, whenever their governors did any thing that was not palpably absurd or impertinent. These fulsome panegyriste stirred up some Prussian patriots, who love their king, to shew the world, that Frederick, who is so unknown to most strangers, does more in silence than half a dozen other demi-

gods of the earth put together. The world was astonished when it learned, that for years past, the king had distributed several millions amongst his subjects, and the writers of newspapers took it very ill that he had done this without their knowledge. It was not till within these few years, that we knew that the land-tax in the Prussian dominions is never altered, though this system is as old as the time of the king's coming to the crown. Long before the philosophers of the last twenty-five years (for, till within these last five and twenty years, there has been no philosophy) began to declaim against capital punishments, the torture, and the duration of law-suits, all these things had been banished out of the Prussian dominions, without any scribbler taking the trouble to sing a *Te Deum* about it (Beccaria himself makes this observation.) Avarice is as little the king's weak side as the love of fame. Nobody gives more willingly than he does, when he sees that the money is likely to be made good use of. He has money in his head, and not in his heart; and œconomy is one of the first virtues of a governor.—But I shall say more of this in my next.

L E T T E R XLVII.

Berlin.

THROUGH all Germany, and particularly through all Saxony, it passes for an established truth; that the king of Prussia knows nothing of the true principles of trade. In the Dutch coffee-houses, those eternal fountains of political nonsense, he is treated as an ignorant dabbler. That foreign merchants should think this, or say so, does not at all surprise me: When they blame the king, they only speak like the great Roman orator, *pro domo sua*; it is impossible that they should be pleased with those principles which preclude them from the power of robbing the king's subjects of their money;—but we hear the same complaints *here*, and in the other countries subject to the king. There are men *here*, who are always crying out on excise, customs, and monopolies, and extolling universal liberty as the first principle of trade. It is very true, that the excise makes the manufactures so expensive, that several of the Prussian, whose productions are extremely good,

cannot

cannot support a competition with those of other countries. It is very true, that the many monopolies to be met with here, are a great restraint upon national industry ; still, however, in my opinion, the king of Prussia may be defended. The fact is this ; every thing here is *connected*, but the true principles on which the excise and monopoly systems in Prussia are grounded are not seen, because, like many other things in the Prussian dominions, they are too near the eyes—let us see if we can explain these matters a little.

Neither commerce, nor manufactures, nor the encouragement of private industry, which tend to produce a great inequality in national riches, and render part of the people affluent at the expence of the rest ; neither all these, nor any part of these, are the corner-stone of the Prussian edifice of state ; it rests on agriculture only : and if we consider the king of Prussia's politics in this point of view, we shall find an exact symmetry of parts in them.

It is on this principle, that that part of the subjects which is the most numerous, has the least business, and is most inclined to live at the expence of the working inhabitant of the country, is obliged to contribute most to the expences of the state. Whoever will take the
trouble

trouble of comparing the several articles of the Prussian excise with each other, will soon find that they bear the exactest proportion possible to luxury, and are, as they ought to be, always the higher, the more the article of consumption on which they are laid is remote from the first necessities of life, which the farmer supplies. For this reason the excise always varies, and must do so. The king has an exact account laid before him of all the articles of luxury imported from abroad. When he sees that the consumption of any article rises immoderately, he immediately lessens it, by raising the excise on that article; he has done so lately by coffee, which, according to his account, had taken many millions out of his country for some years past. The meaning of this manœuvre was to recommend to his subjects warm beer, which is the produce of the country, is a more wholesome, and more palatable food than coffee, and from the use of which he himself had found great benefit when he was young. Another time he observed, that 12,000 florins worth of eggs were every year brought to Berlin out of Saxony. In order to save his subjects this expence, he immediately laid a considerable tax on the Saxon eggs, and thus encouraged his own farmers to breed chickens. This principle

is one of the plainest in legislation; it is that which prevails in all enlightened countries, only not with the same good sense and equity as in Prussia. Indeed the English customs and excise are much more hostile to eating and drinking than the Prussian; and it is a proverb in Holland, that of every dish of fish he eats, a man pays five parts to the state, and one to the fish-monger.

The complaints which have the most foundation of truth in them, are those which are made with respect to the price of the absolute necessities of life. These, it is said, are so high, that it raises the price of work too much, and by so doing tends to ruin, not only the Prussian manufactures, but the monopoly itself. But these taxes only affect the inhabitants of the towns, the artists, manufacturers, labourers, merchants, and all who live by the service of the state.

In order to form a just notion of the influence which high taxes have upon the necessities of life, one should consider the connection which the industry of the citizen has with the productions of the country, before one allows one self to think of its effects on foreign trade. The king of Prussia, who in every thing follows the order of nature, has not been so solicitous

licitous to procure money from foreigners, as to stop the channels through which his own money went out of the country. Consider things in this light, and you will find, that the imposts on the necessaries of life have not been any restraint on private industry ; for the price of work has kept on a level with the price of the necessaries of life, and the excise has only been a new and larger canal to assist the circulation of money. The king, who regularly pursued his plan of making the country independant of foreign industry, took care that the money paid by the subject should flow back from the exchequer by the surest channels. Thus all that was spent by the soldier, and all that the inhabitants of great towns spent for the comforts of life, flowed back again to the farmer, and encouraged internal agriculture and industry. In order that this might be so, the duties on foreign goods, such as cloths, linens, and the like, were always so high, that only the highest degree of luxury could prefer them to the same commodities made at home ; and it was proper that those who had this degree of luxury should be punished for it.

As to the exportation of Prussian manufactures, which of course would be affected by the excise ; all that is to be said, is, that the lesser evil is to
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be preferred to a greater. Luxury is the ruin of a state. Immoderate enjoyment is the greatest political sin. An unequal participation of national riches is the cause why half a people are tyrants, and the other half slaves. Thus cry out our philosophers here, and they are in the right. Still more, you find it observed in almost every parliamentary debate in England, that British freedom will be ruined by the disproportionate riches of part of its members, and the facility there is of acquiring them. They say that pleasure, corruption, ambition, and extreme poverty, have enervated the nation ; but how is it possible to set bounds to luxury and immense riches, except by the Prussian excise ? The more a man spends, and the richer he is, the more he pays to the state, which divides this overflow of the richer class amongst the poorer, and by this means restores the balance as much as it is possible to do it. Once grant that the real strength of a people consists in frugality, industry, and an equal division of property, and you must be content to put yourself above the trifling inconveniencies, which a small part of the whole must unavoidably be exposed to, from an attention to these maxims.

Is there any country that has wasted its strength on merchandize, that has been able to
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support itself long? The immense quantity of riches, the inevitable consequences of the freedom of trade, have always drawn along with them luxury, extravagance, effeminacy, tyranny, and the consequent ruin of the country. Mr. Wraxall himself, who has echoed the outcry of the merchant on the Prussian system of finance, but who might have convinced himself, in the houses of the Prussian farmers, that the king's subjects are not at all in arms against him, as he says they are; Mr. Wraxall himself is the warmest declaimer against the pride and tyranny which great riches have introduced in England; but let him shew me another dam to these ravages, besides that which has been opposed to them by the king of Prussia.

It is a strange perverting of political reasoning, when one hears the same man cry in England, that the great wealth of the nobility hath undermined the wealth of the state, and finds him in Prussia joining the Prussian nobility, in saying, that the prosperity of the farmers is hurtful to the interests of Prussia. History can shew no example of the prosperity of the farmers having excited convulsions in a state; whereas it abounds in instances of states overturned by the power of the nobles and the freedom of trade. The farmer seldom has too much;

much; but if he does happen to be rich, his income is more equally divided than that of the inhabitant of the city; he has besides more children to provide for out of it; besides this, as the farmer's substance is procured by hard labour, he is more frugal in the management of it, and on that account likewise less hurtful to the state.

The Prussian system of excise does not in the least affect the real prosperity of the subject; it affects only the consumption and the disorderly foreign trade. The only object of it is to make the subjects frugal; and frugality is the mother of industry. There is no science in which so much sophistry has been used as in that of state œconomy. It is generally thought that trade alone will make a country rich, whereas nothing is so false. Cadiz, Naples, Lisbon, Smyrna, Aleppo, and many other flourishing trading towns I could mention, flourish at the expence of the countries to which they belong. When they cry out in Prussia, that trade has fallen off, it only means that the consumption has decreased; no doubt it is a falling off to the dealers in coffee, that they cannot sell as much coffee as they were used to do; but these people, who are the persons that have raised the outcry against
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the king, ought to consider, that a country of Jews (I speak of modern Jews) is the most wretched of all countries, and that a governor is in the right to concern himself very little about what may be for their advantage.

If foreign trade has decreased in the Prussian dominions, on the other hand industry has increased. There is a visible proof of this in the astonishing increase of towns and of population. No country in Europe of the same size has doubled its population, as the Prussian dominions have done (in these I do not comprise the conquered countries) within the space of fifty years. This single fact contradicts all the outcry about Prussian despotism. Effects must always correspond with their causes, and no administration hostile to humanity, could produce such an astonishing increase of men.

Even the monopolies make part of the king's system of universal benevolence. I shall not enter into an exact disquisition of every single article, but only consider that which raises the greatest outcry, namely the monopoly of wood. The company who is in possession of this large sum of money, pays the king, or what is the same thing, the state, for the king has neither stables of six thousand horses, nor coach-houses with

coaches in them worth 50,000 livres, nor a table of fifty covers, nor mistresses, nor hunts, nor journies which cost several millions. This company is not allowed to set an arbitrary price on its commodity, but the wood is taxed, and it is obliged to furnish the best sort. Though the price of the wood be high, it keeps pace with the wages of the manufacturers; so no man feels it but those who live upon their own estates without doing any thing, or those who receive stipends from the court. If the former of these would work like the other parts of the industrious public, they would reckon the articles of fire-wood in their account; as they do not, they are very properly punished for their laziness. As to the latter, to be sure they do not get much, but what they get is sufficient for the decent purposes of life, and the king's maxim is, that every man shall have enough, but no man shall have too much. To the farmer the monopoly is of service, for the company is obliged to sell him the wood as cheap as if there was no monopoly, and besides, he is himself allowed to carry a certain portion of it to market, where the regulations enable him to sell it to better advantage than he would do otherwise. The monopoly also serves to preserve the forests,

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which all Europe has long lamented the diminution of. The scarcity of wood makes people more cautious how they grub up and burn. Nor does the monopoly affect any but the inhabitants of Berlin and Potsdam, who have great advantages over the rest of the country, from the residence of many officers of state in them, and the facility with which money circulates. Strangers, indeed, who reason from the state of their own purses, and see that the materials for fire are as dear at Berlin and Potsdam as Brasil and Campeachy wood, form no prejudices in favour of the Prussian monopolies, and thus far they are in the right; but when they build upon such grounds to call the king of Prussia a tyrant, as Mr. Wraxall does, it is going a little too far.

The other monopolies are like those we meet with in other countries, to wit, on tobacco, salt, cards, and the like. The king encourages every kind of manufacture and trade which does not militate with the whole system of his administration, but he endeavours chiefly to promote the exportation of such articles as are of real advantage to the country, and least likely to be affected by a competition with other powers, or the variations of fashion. Of this

kind are the woollen stuffs of this place, the Silesian linens and cloths, tobacco, and various other articles; the prime materials of which grow in the country, and find an easy admittance every where. Besides these primary articles, the manufactures of silk, wrought iron, and steel, looking-glasses, china, sugar, and above all, the trade in wood bring great sums of foreign gold into the country. The Poles pay a large tribute to Prussian industry; and, indeed, every where the balance is in favour of the Prussian merchant, in consequence of that frugality and abstinence, which follows from the king's system of excise.

The king's treasury, into which so much money flows every year, is commonly looked upon as one of the greatest obstacles to the trade of the country. This may be true with regard to the common Jewish sort of trade, which, though favourable to laziness and avarice, is, in fact, as hurtful to the state as the sale of mountebank and quack medicines; but in my opinion, the king's treasury is one of his wisest institutions. He yearly lays by in it a sum of money, which bears a fixed proportion to that which the balance of trade in his favour brings him in from the stranger. It is generally

rally thought that the sum thus set by amounts to 100,000*l.* or as much as the new buildings, the payment of the troops, and the improvements made in the country respectively cost; but if we consider that the whole income of the state is appropriated to particular and specific purposes, according to a settled and permanent order, never interrupted by any *menus plaisirs*; and that, according to the highest calculation, the balance in favour of the Prussian trade produces only two hundred and fifty thousand pounds, it will appear that the king does not lay by half of what comes from foreign trade.

It is one of the nonsensical maxims of the present age, which, like a great many others of the same kind, have crept into our modern political theories and romances, that all the money of a country must be employed in the circulation, and none of it be laid by for cases of necessity; but it was owing to the royal treasure that no taxes were raised in the last war, and it is for this very purpose that it was intended; for in the American war, the increase of taxes fell heavier on the French and English than all the other pressures of the state put together. Schroeder, who is one of the oldest and most
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acute of the German political writers, has long shewn the falsity of this maxim. Besides, that, taxes fall more heavily on the subject, and are more difficult to raise in time of war than in time of peace, they cannot be so soon collected; and if in consequence of this you are compelled to add new ones, the result will be what we have seen happen in France, many provinces will be so exhausted in three or four years as not to recover for a whole century. In these emergencies ministers have recourse to state lotteries, loans, &c. which finally produce the fine system of debt, which annually consumes half the revenue of Great Britain.

If the king of Prussia had had no treasure, it would have been impossible, after the terrible war which lasted from 1756 to 1763, for his lands not only to recover, but to be in a more flourishing situation than they were before. There is also a local consideration, which makes the king of Prussia's treasure of peculiar consequence to that country, which is, that as several parts of it lie open to the enemy, were it not for this resource it would be possible at the breaking out of a war, to cut off a great part of the revenue, by seizing upon a principal town. Indeed

it is to the reserved supplies which have enabled him to parry every evil of this kind, that the king owes the success of those operations which have rendered his name immortal. Nor is the treasury intirely inactive at any period. At different times the king has lent very considerable sums at a very inconsiderable interest to the states of several of his provinces; these sums are in circulation, and all that the king requires, is, the exact reimbursement at the time fixed.

The Prussian state, considered as a state, is the richest in Europe; and it is absolutely impossible that it ever should be exposed to feel any inconvenience from the want of money; for its system of finance is established upon such solid foundations, that if any of the king's successors were to think of introducing a change, it would overturn the whole building. You would hardly think it, but I can assure you, that the bank bills of this place are bought up with avidity. No body has any opinion that they will ever lose their credit. The Dutch are very happy when this bank will take their money, as notwithstanding all the outcry about Prussian despotism, they are convinced it cannot be more secure any where than it is here. Upon the whole, it is easy to see, that

that most of our very wise declaimers against the government of Prussia, draw their topics from the difference they observe between it and the other European governments; whereas if they would give themselves the trouble to lift up their eyes and give matters a little closer and nearer inspection, they would soon give up their prejudices, unless, indeed, their self-love made them incapable of all judgment. I have known none of these gentlemen but what have praised, in some part or other of their works, the very principles on which the Prussian government is built, though they overlooked them, and could not see them when they were writing professedly about it. This arises from the amazing difference that there is betwixt theory and practice, and that in all philosophical declamations people commonly only consider the end, without thinking of the means by which it is to be brought about; nay, they often overlook the only means by which it can be brought about at all. Hence it has appeared, that those who have written the most strongly against luxury, have not been favourable to the Prussian system of excise, though it is the only sure dam whereby all excesses may be restrained. All the political principles with respect to the happiness of nations,

nations, which l'Abbé Raynal gives us in that famous *Histoire Politique et Philosophique* of his, in which he is so violent against the king of Prussia, without knowing any thing about him, had been adopted in Prussia, and perhaps no where else in the wide world before the Abbé put pen to paper.

Another part of these declaimers find fault only for the sake of appearing singular. Mr. Guibert, and some others of our countrymen, are amongst this class. These gentlemen took it in their heads to exhibit the king to a people, the god of whose idolatry he has long been, through a kind of magic lanthorn, with his head where his heels should be. Doubtless, the indifference with which the king is accustomed to behold all such buffooneries, must have made them vastly pleased with their wise work.

The king of Prussia, and his father, have solved the three most difficult problems of state that exist, and history affords no example of their having been solved so quickly, so happily, and so universally, as they have been by these princes. They have made a lazy, prodigal, and stupid people industrious, active, and alert; they have given to a country, which had been entirely neglected by nature, a value which
many

many of the most highly favoured countries have not, and they have placed a small nation in a situation not only to vanquish *in a favourable moment* all the combined forces of the mightiest monarchies of Europe united, but to be able *at any time* to measure swords with either of them singly.

